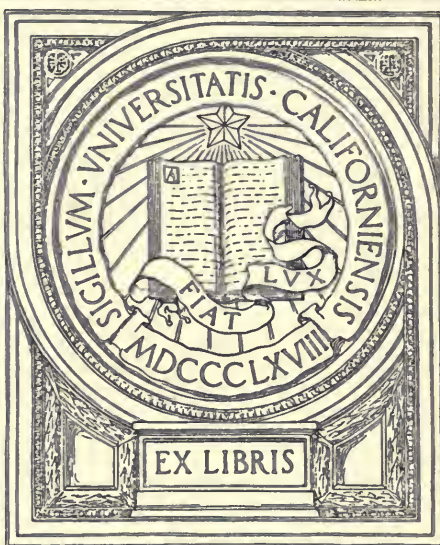




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AN INQUIRY

INTO THE CAUSES OF THE

GENERAL POVERTY

DEPENDENCE OF MANKIND

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AN INQUIRY

INTO THE CAUSES OF THE

GENERAL POVERTY

AND

*DEPENDENCE OF MANKIND.*

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AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE CAUSES OF THE  
GENERAL POVERTY  
AND  
THE PREVALENCE OF MALARIAL FEVER

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AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE CAUSES  
OF THE  
GENERAL POVERTY  
AND  
DEPENDENCE OF MANKIND;  
INCLUDING  
A FULL INVESTIGATION  
OF THE  
CORN LAWS.

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BY WILLIAM DAWSON.

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EDINBURGH:

*Printed by C. Stewart;*

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1814.

AN INQUIRY

INTO THE CAUSE

OF THE

GENERAL POVERTY

AND

DEPENDENCE OF THE PEOPLE

IN

A FULL INVESTIGATION

OF THE

CAUSE OF

---

BY WILLIAM LAMBERT

---

LONDON:

JOHN W. PATERSON,

10, MARK LANE, AND 10, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1847.

1847.

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## AN INQUIRY, &c.

### CHAP. I.

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*Of the Causes of the Equality of Men as to Rank in Nations of Hunters ; and of the dependent situation to which the majority of the People are reduced in the Shepherd state.*

IN countries in which there were no domestic animals, as North America, New Holland, &c. the first inhabitants, from the natural aversion of man to labour, and their having no proper instruments for digging the ground, would be induced to rely on hunting and fishing for the principal part of their subsistence. But we cannot suppose that any man of common sense, even in the rudest state of society, would trust entirely to the chance of success in hunting, when it was in his power to have sheep and cows, &c. to supply him when unsuccessful, and as he became old or infirm ; far less can we suppose, that a number of men would



overlook such obvious advantages for ages ; nor is there any instance on record, of any society of men, who depended upon hunting and fishing for the principal part of their food, in any country in which such domestic animals could be obtained. We must therefore conclude, that what is called the shepherd state has been the original state of societies in all such countries.

It is obvious that a considerable number of people, who have flocks and herds, can subsist together in any country tolerably fertile ; and, as people who lived in such situations must have had much leisure, their attention would necessarily be directed to the amelioration of their condition, by gradual improvements in those manufactures of primary necessity, of which they possessed the materials in abundance ; and they would be gradually induced to use their horses and oxen in the cultivation of the soil :—inducements to improve their situation which were not possessed by those who lived in countries where no domestic animals existed ; where few people could live together ; and where constant exertions, were necessary to protect their persons, and procure food,

Hence, as it is fully ascertained, that millions of people in Tartary and Arabia, where horses and oxen have always been in plenty, have lived

in the shepherd state, with a small proportion of tillage, for thousands of years, without advancing to the more improved condition of agriculturists; there is no reason for supposing that America, New Holland, &c. had been inhabited only for a few centuries when discovered, merely because the people had made so little progress towards civilization. Even in the countries which are destitute of domestic animals, the inhabitants make greater advances in social union, in proportion as greater numbers can subsist together. In North America, where deer and bisons were in considerable plenty, the people lived in a much more social manner, and when first discovered, had improved their mental powers much more than the inhabitants of New Holland, in which there were few animals of any kind fit for food, and none of any considerable size; where the inhabitants are said to have depended upon fish, grubs, and fern-roots for food, and where very few consequently could live together. In such countries, the inhabitants have so few opportunities of improvement, that it is far from being improbable, that they may have continued in that state many thousands of years.

The situation of individuals, in nations of hunters and fishers, with respect to one another, is totally different from what it is in nations of shep-

herds, or where the people depend upon agriculture for subsistence. Each individual hunter depends upon his own exertions for a supply of his wants ; and, as no one can regularly supply his neighbours with food and clothing, so as to render them dependent upon him for these necessities, and induce them in return to obey his orders, the strong can only exert his own individual strength in maltreating the weak, which will be effectually opposed by the neighbours, not only from a natural regard to justice, but also from a dread of meeting with similar treatment themselves. Thus, a total want of means to engage or support dependents, is the cause of the perfect equality of the people in point of rank, and that there are no masters or servants in such nations.

But in countries in which there are sheep and cows, individuals, by possessing numbers of these domestic animals, can support numerous families. Hence, where there are no common protectors to defend the weak, those who have no domestic animals, and even those who have a few, but not power to protect them, must feel it to be their interest to make the best bargain they can with those who have large flocks and herds and power to protect them, and become their servants rather than run the risk of starving of hunger or of being robbed and murdered.



Thus, all those who have no domestic animals, and those who have not power to protect what they have, must, in such situations, become the servants and dependents of the rich and powerful. It is this command over a number of dependents which constitutes the power of the masters of the Tartar hordes and Arabian tribes, which may gradually increase or decrease, as the leader behaves well or ill to his dependents and can protect them, and as the dependents think it their interest to continue with, or to leave their leader.

The situation of the dependents naturally induces them to adopt a fawning submissive behaviour to masters, which generates and fosters in them, self-sufficiency, arrogance and insolence; manners, which can have no existence in nations of hunters, where there are no dependents to generate them.

Mr Weld, in his travels in North America, after giving a narrative of his journey from Buffalo Creek, where he and his fellow-travellers engaged some Indians to carry their baggage, to Genesee river, says \*, “ Before I dismiss the subject entirely, I must observe to you that the Indians did not seem to think the carrying of our bag-

\* Volume II, page 325.

“ gage was in any manner degrading to them,  
 “ and after having received their due, they shook  
 “ hands with, and parted from us, not as from  
 “ employers who had hired them, but as from  
 “ friends whom they had been assisting, and were  
 “ now sorry to leave.” From the behaviour of  
 these Indians, it appears, that executing work for  
 hire, when not depending upon it for subsistence,  
 or upon the employers for favour, does not gene-  
 rate servile manners : and experience shows that  
 the manners of the lower classes are always more  
 fawning as they are more afraid of a want of sub-  
 sistence. Hence the manners of the servants and  
 labourers in the Highlands and Islands of Scot-  
 land are abject in the extreme ; in England more  
 independent, in North America still more inde-  
 pendent, and of these Indians totally independent  
 even to employers, to whom they are executing  
 what we consider the most degrading work for  
 hire. And the manners of the high ranks in every  
 country are more assuming and insolent to the  
 low, in proportion as these are more fawning and  
 submissive.



## CHAP. II.

### OF THE EFFECTS OF THE APPROPRIATION OF LAND.

#### SECT. I.

*Of the Causes which reduce so great a majority of the People to poverty, in Civilised Societies living in a simple state.*

WHEN the whole land of a country is the private property of a few individuals, those who have no land must, to obtain food, serve those who have food to spare, or they must obtain land from those who have it to spare, for raising food themselves, by giving the owners a share of the produce, or labour or attendance. And where there are no common protectors appointed by the community, with sufficient power to defend the weak from op-

pression, even those who have some land, but not sufficient power to protect their property, must also attach themselves to some more powerful neighbour who can protect them. The estates of the weak will, in such a state of society, decrease in size from poverty and oppression; whereas, those of the powerful, particularly if the law of primogeniture is the rule of succession, will be increased in various ways, and the power of the owners must increase in proportion.

The quantity of labour given for food, and the share of the produce given for the possession of land, must be regulated among free men, like other mercantile transactions, by the proportion that the number of those who have no land bears to the quantity of food the owners *wish to exchange for labour*, and the extent of land, fit for cultivation, which the proprietors *wish to let*. The wages, or the reward, of labourers, therefore, must rise or fall according to that proportion; as well as the rent or price paid for the temporary occupation of land.

Hence, in the exchanges between those classes, the relative value of land and labour must vary, as either of them is more or less plentiful, in proportion to the demand. When fertile land is in great plenty, and labourers scarce; and when the

owners are anxious to increase their spare produce, to purchase manufactures and luxuries, as in North America at present; the labourers not only obtain high wages, but the land-owners, to procure them more readily, and upon easier terms, find that it is their interest to treat them well in every respect. But, notwithstanding the scarcity of labourers in that country, and though they on that account obtain high wages, they cannot compel the owners of land to comply with any condition against their own inclinations, as the latter have it always in their option to dispense with their services; whereas, in a populous country, where the people live in a simple state, and cannot better their condition by emigration, it is evident, that, as they increase in number, land and food must become more scarce, and those who have no land must, in the character of metayers\*, or, as tenants, give a greater part of the produce for liberty to occupy land, or, in that of labourers a greater part of their time for food. They will be obliged to submit, as their numbers increase, to harder conditions of various kinds, for food, or for liberty to occupy land.

\* Metayers are men who occupy farms in France which are stocked by the landlord. In Scotland they are called steel-bow tenants. In all countries where the peasantry are very poor, the landlords are obliged to adopt this method.



And when a country becomes very populous, and food very scarce, so many labourers are seeking employment, that the competition reduces the wages of labour so low, that the weak and infirm are not able to earn even necessaries. They, therefore, must subsist by begging or stealing, or starve for want. Nor does there appear to be any check to the misery of the poor in such a case but deaths, and their being deterred from sexual intercourse by fear of misery and starvation. Thus it appears, that the reward of labour, in a simple state of society, is regulated by the proportion that the quantity of fertile land, *which the owners wish to let*, and of food, *which they wish to exchange for labour*, bears to the number of people who have no land.

The condition which determines the reward of labour, is printed in italics, because there may be much food given to horses and dogs, and proprietors may use great tracts of their land as forests for hunting, &c.; which food and land, used in those ways, cannot relieve the wants of labourers; their condition would be the same if neither such food nor land existed. It necessarily follows, therefore, that it is of the greatest importance to the increase and welfare of mankind, that the land be so much divided, that every proprietor shall find it necessary to cultivate his

share in the best manner, and have no inducement to give the produce to useless animals, or turn any part of it into a hunting field.

S E C T. II.

*That the law of primogeniture has not only a powerful tendency to lessen the numbers of mankind; but also to make them slaves.*

LARGE estates are not only ruinous to labourers, by diminishing the quantity of subsistence and the demand for labourers; but they have also a powerful tendency to make them slaves. For as a proprietor can turn out any person who may occupy a part of his estate without a lease, if it is very extensive, and lying contiguous, (like the estates of the barons formerly in Britain, and at present in Poland and Russia,) he can, by that means, banish such person from his native place; nor can the friends or relations of the banished person give him a house or shelter, but at the risk of being banished themselves. Nor will neighbouring landlords lessen the power of their order, by allowing such persons an asylum upon their estates. In such situations, therefore, the best laws can have little effect in protecting people from the tyranny of great proprietors of

land, and of their stewards and favourites, as the people must expect to be banished if they apply to a court of justice for redress. In these circumstances, when there is no prospect of relief from emigration, men will submit to any inconvenience or harshness of treatment; they will even sell themselves and children for slaves, rather than be banished from their native place, and run the risk of perishing for want of food and clothes, and a house to shelter them. two

But where land is much divided, if a person is turned out of possession of land or employment by one proprietor, he may get a possession or employment from another in the same neighbourhood: so that no individual has it in his power to banish a person from his friends and neighbours, or can commit rapes, murders, or any other atrocious crime, with impunity, such as have been and are too frequently committed on very extensive estates, where the people depend entirely upon the owners of the land for employment and a residence. The more that the land is divided among the proprietors in a simple state of society, the better it is cultivated, the greater is the demand for labourers, and the proprietors have less power over the occupiers. Hence the miserable slavish situation of the people, and the absolute power of the great owners of land in Britain in



former ages, and in Poland and other nations of Europe at present, and the comparatively independent situation of the poorest people in the ancient Roman republic.

It was the dependence of the people upon the owners of the lands in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, that enabled the proprietors to carry with them almost all the men of a proper age into the rebellions in 1715 and 1745; and also to raise regiments for government during the American war, and since, while the most popular proprietors in England, and the Low country of Scotland, could not raise a company without a high bounty.

When the great proprietors in the Highlands wish to raise a number of men, they communicate their intention to their stewards, and to the principal tacksmen who possess their estates, who are acquainted with the situation and number of the families of the small tenants, subtenants, and cotters; and a list is made up of the number which they think each family may spare; then the heads of these families are told by the proprietor, that, as he understands that their family consists of so many men, he expects that a certain number will enlist in his regiment. No men are here demanded, but these people know that they must either send the number expected, and give up

their sons or brothers, or lose their possessions; and the families and friends of the men demanded, are thus involved in deep distress. But however disagreeable the service proposed may be, the men demanded, to save their families from ruin, generally pretend to go willingly, though there were several instances, when raising regiments during the American war, of men being brought to the recruiting parties bound, and guarded by their own fathers and brothers until they were attested. I shall not attempt to describe either the anguish of such sufferers, or of their fathers and brothers who were compelled by stern necessity to be the instruments of inflicting their sufferings.

These sentiments are corroborated by the observations of Lord Selkirk, who, after visiting the country, and examining the situation of the people with great attention, published a treatise in 1804 on emigration, at the end of which he expresses himself as follows: “ From the observations that  
 “ have been made on the general state of society  
 “ in the Highlands, it will be understood that no  
 “ man can live there as an independent labourer,  
 “ —that every inhabitant of the country is under  
 “ an absolute necessity of obtaining a possession  
 “ of land; and as the competitors for such possessions are so numerous that all cannot be ac-



“ commodated, every one, who is not determined  
 “ on quitting the country, feels himself very much  
 “ at the mercy of the proprietor, on whom he de-  
 “ pends for the means of remaining. To this is  
 “ to be added the poverty of the lower orders,  
 “ the great extent of particular estates, the re-  
 “ mote insulated situation of many, their distance  
 “ from the ordinary courts of justice, and the  
 “ great expence which must on that account be  
 “ incurred by any attempt to procure redress for  
 “ any wrong. All these circumstances combine to  
 “ give a landlord, in these remote situations, an  
 “ extraordinary degree of personal weight; and  
 “ the regular authority of a justice of the peace  
 “ being superadded, no individual among the de-  
 “ pendants can venture to contest his power.”

“ In the present state of things, it is not per-  
 “ haps too much to say, that, in a great part of  
 “ the Highlands, the proper administration of  
 “ justice still depends less on the regular checks  
 “ of law, than on the personal character of the  
 “ resident gentry: the power that is in their  
 “ hands is, in a great proportion of the country,  
 “ exercised with a degree of moderation and  
 “ equity highly honourable to individuals; but,  
 “ unless the proprietors of the Highlands were a  
 “ race of angels, this could not be without ex-  
 “ ceptions. Above all, when it is considered,

“ that many extensive estates are scarcely visted  
 “ by their owners once in the course of several  
 “ years, and that the almost despotic authority of  
 “ the landlord is transferred to the hands of un-  
 “ derlings who have no permanent interest in the  
 “ welfare of the people, it is not to be supposed  
 “ that abuses will not prevail, and that oppres-  
 “ sion will not be practised.”

“ The complaints of the common people are in  
 “ many parts as loud as they dare to utter them,  
 “ but the instances of injustice, which they may  
 “ occasionally experience, produce on their minds  
 “ an aggravated impression, from the great and  
 “ constant sources of irritation arising out of the  
 “ general state of the country; and hence, per-  
 “ haps, their complaints are too indiscriminate.”

“ Of the prevalence of abuses, we have also  
 “ the testimony of a resident clergyman, Mr  
 “ Irvine, in his Enquiry into the Causes and Ef-  
 “ fects of Emigration.

“ Were it consistent,” he says, “ with my enqui-  
 “ ry, I would willingly pass over the conduct of  
 “ factors in silence.” P. 41.

“ If a person is so unfortunate as to give any  
 “ one of them offence, no matter how, he either

“ privately or publicly uses every artifice to render him odious to his neighbours or his landlord, till in the end he finds it necessary to withdraw.”

“ It would be tedious and irksome to enumerate the various methods by which a factor may get rid of a person whom he hates, or let in (as it is termed) one whom he loves.” p. 42.

“ The power with which the factors of many Highland estates are invested, seems to carry with it temptations almost too great for human nature ; but though it is on this class of men that the weight of popular odium chiefly falls, ought not the blame, in just reason, to lye with those who suffer such abuses to be committed in their name.?”

“ Taking things, however, as we have found them, it will not be thought extraordinary, that the crime newly laid down in the *code* of the Highland Society, under the title of *calumniating factors*, unknown as it is in the laws of England, should, in some places, be deemed the most dangerous and unpardonable of all species of sedition.”



From these observations it is evident, that the law of primogeniture is not only unjust and cruel to the younger children of the owners of land, but, by its irresistible effect in promoting a monopoly of land, has a powerful tendency to lessen the quantity of food, and the numbers of mankind, and to reduce all who do exist to a state of abject dependence and wretchedness, except the owners of land : and the necessary consequence of entails is to produce all these evils in a much higher degree.

### CHAP. III.

ON THE OBSCURITY IN WHICH THE PRESENT SITUATION OF EUROPE HAS INVOLVED THE SUBJECT OF THIS INQUIRY.

THAT over-population must impoverish the labourers, is obvious in a simple state of society, where the spare produce of each estate is given for service or labour to the people residing upon the estate, or in the neighbourhood, as was the case in ancient Greece and Rome, and likewise

in Britain in former ages, when the spare produce of the proprietors was given to cultivators, menial servants, artisans, and retainers, who resided upon the lands which produced their food.

In these situations, it was obvious to every one, that the want of land, or over-populousness, impoverished the labourers ; and, accordingly, the surplus people were occasionally sent from the different nations of Greece and Rome, as colonies, to take possession of land, and raise food for themselves ; but where a large tract of land belonged to one man, as was generally the case in Europe, for many centuries, the power of each proprietor to protect himself, and to domineer over his dependents and neighbours, increased in proportion to the increase of people upon his estate. It was therefore the interest of such proprietors, when power was the principal object of their ambition, to subdivide the people's possessions as they increased in number, and to prevent emigrations. But in this situation it was also seen, that a want of land and food, or over-populousness, impoverished the labourers ; and the smaller the society was, the more obvious it would appear. A few families in a small island would see plainly that any considerable addition to their numbers would ruin them. And, accordingly, infanticide, and

other cruel methods of checking population, are said to have been first practised in islands.

But the taste of the great proprietors of land, for refinements in manufactures and works of art, which has prevailed in Europe since retainers were prohibited, and since the greatest proprietors have been compelled to submit to general laws; the security of property which that submission has produced, and, particularly, the circumstance of manufacturers separating themselves from the cultivators, and resorting to free towns for mutual protection and convenience; have, in a great degree, broken off the direct intercourse between the proprietors of land and the manufacturing labourers in many parts of Europe. By which means, the effect of scarcity of food upon the reward of labour, is not so distinctly seen as in a simple state of society, where the exchange of labour for food is direct. On the contrary, circumstances have occurred, which make dearness of food appear to be advantageous to the labourers; particularly this fact, that the labourers in Europe are actually poorest and idlest in many countries and districts where provisions are cheap, and from which quantities are annually exported; and richest and most industrious, in countries and districts where provisions are scarce and dear, and must be imported to supply the inhabitants.



From these appearances it has been concluded by men of great intelligence, that cheapness of food renders labourers idle and poor, and that a scanty supply is the cause of their industry and riches; and Dr Smith, after stating that the colonies of the Greeks and Romans were established to supply the people with land \*, says, “that the establishment of the European colonies in America arose from no necessity, and though the utility which has resulted from them has been very great, it is not altogether so clear and evident. It was not understood at their first establishment, and was not the motive either of that establishment, or of the discoveries which gave occasion to it; and the nature, extent, and limits of that utility, are not, perhaps, well understood at this day.”

To detect the fallacy of these appearances, and to shew that the advantages of colonies arise from the same cause in modern as in ancient times, it seems to be necessary to trace the effects of manufactures, and of commerce with foreign nations, separately. To do this with some degree of accuracy, as commerce with different provinces produces the same effect as that with foreign nations, I shall, in the first place, endeavour to trace the

\* Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. p. 347.

effects of manufactures upon a people possessing a small fertile territory, in an insulated situation, who have no trade with any other nation; and shall suppose that the land is much divided, and cultivated by the owners, assisted by hired labourers; and that it contains mines of all the metals, and produces all the necessary materials of manufactures; and that slavery is not allowed. After which, I shall endeavour to trace the effects of commerce with foreign nations, when the causes, which make labourers poorest and idlest in populous countries which export provisions, will clearly appear; and it will also appear, that the advantages of colonies arise from the same causes in modern as in ancient times.



CHAP. IV.

OF THE EFFECTS OF ESTABLISHING MANUFACTURES  
IN FREE TOWNS; OF ANNULLING SUCH LAWS AS  
OBSTRUCT, AND ENACTING SUCH AS ARE PROPER  
FOR ENCOURAGING CULTIVATION, IN A SMALL IN-  
SULATED COUNTRY.

SECT. I.

*Of the effects of establishing Manufactures, upon  
the Circumstances of the People who have no  
Land.*

It has already appeared, that, in the most simple  
state of society, labourers give only a part of their  
time for food and materials for clothes, &c. and  
that this part is more or less, according to the de-  
mand for labourers. The remainder of their time  
is employed in making their own clothes, and  
other necessaries. Even in that state of society,  
some of the labourers apply themselves to differ-

ent trades, such as those of joiners, smiths, masons, weavers, &c. who for convenience live in villages; and expert, diligent workmen in every line are better supplied with necessaries than those of a different description. But when such tradesmen depend entirely upon the owners of land, not only for a house to live in, but also for protection of their persons and property, and must not marry their daughters, or dispose of their property by will, without the consent of their lord, and must follow him in a military capacity when ordered, as was the case in Britain in former ages, no material accumulation of capital, or improvements in the arts of manufacturing, could be expected. In such a state of society, there are few exchanges of articles of dress or convenience among the people who have no land. The exchanges consist almost entirely of labour for food, or for materials of clothing, or other necessaries, which are the produce of the land.

But when tradesmen resort to towns, in which they chuse their own magistrates, and find that their persons and property are secure, industrious individuals of talents and enterprise, will not only exert themselves to increase the quantity of their work, for their own use, but they will exert themselves to contrive tools and machines, by which they will be enabled to execute three or four times

more work than they could execute without such assistance. And as the neighbours of these ingenious men, and the rising generation, will learn these arts, the number of individuals of that description will gradually increase in the different trades; and as these people will have to give no more of their work for food, and the materials of their manufactures, than what is given by others, they will each have a quantity of their work to spare to exchange with, and to accommodate one another; and in proportion as they improve in the arts of manufacturing, and as their stock in machinery accumulates, and proper divisions of labour are formed (which can only be expected to take place gradually), they will obtain a greater abundance of manufactures.

But the increase of manufactures, by the division of labour, and by the use of tools and machines for assisting the powers of man, though very great, is trifling, when compared to the increase produced by machines for applying to these purposes the powers of the elements. Various machines, by the force of water, of air, and of steam, guided by a few hands, execute as much work as hundreds of men could do without such assistance; and, consequently, the incomes and exchanges among manufacturers, must increase



rapidly with the increase of stock employed in machinery, worked by the elements.

Some of the people, even in a simple state of society, obtain a living by keeping small shops to facilitate the exchanges of labour for food, and between the labourers in different occupations; and it is obvious, that the number of shop-keepers, and the amount of their stock, must increase with the number and greatness of the exchanges among the manufacturers; that when they become very considerable, warehouses will be established, the owners of which will employ the manufacturers, and supply the shop-keepers; that as business increases, clerks will be requisite to assist in the shops and warehouses, in proportion to that increase; that when the exchanges become great and numerous, banking or dealing in bills will become a considerable business; that there will be occasion for conveyancers to form contracts and deeds, and courts of justice to settle disputes, with judges to preside, and lawyers to plead for, and assist the litigants, in proportion to the number and value of the houses and machinery which are let or sold, of the money lent, and the manufactures which are exchanged; in proportion, also, to the increase of the income of the owners of stock, of bankers, lawyers, shop-keepers, clerks, &c. they will be able and willing, in case of



bodily disorders, to pay for the assistance of physicians and surgeons, so that the number and payment of these will increase with the increase of manufactures; and the demand for teachers, and artists of various kinds, will increase with the opulence of the society. When houses, machinery, or other stock, cannot be occupied or employed by the owners with advantage, they will either be let for rent, or sold for money, which will be lent for interest, thus forming a class of people who receive rent for the use of houses, machinery, and money, as rent, is paid for the use of land. By these, and various other means, a considerable proportion of the people who have no land, in a manufacturing society, obtain considerable incomes in a much more independent and comfortable way, and enjoy much greater opportunities of improving their minds and manners, than it is possible for that class of people to obtain in a simple state of society.

Machines for saving labour, appear, at first view, to diminish the demand for labourers; but as the value of the labour which is saved is an addition to the income of the owner, and as that additional income, if not bestowed on the maintenance of useless animals, must be given for labour in some other way, either in augmenting these works, or in articles of convenience or luxury produced by

labour, an additional demand for labourers is by these means formed in the lines in which the revenue derived from the machines is expended. And as that revenue is great in proportion to the number of people deprived of employment by the machines, that additional revenue will give employment to an equal number of additional labourers in the lines in which the owners chuse to lay it out.

When machines are erected for spinning, for instance, the demand for spinners, is, no doubt, lessened, but the demand is in an equal degree augmented, for people to erect, repair, and guide these machines, and to supply the owners with the articles upon which they chuse to bestow their additional profits.

The erectors of newly-invented machines frequently draw for a time great profits, but, as other similar machines come into competition, the price of their work is gradually reduced, until the profits are brought to a level with the profits of stock in other branches of business. The whole community are then furnished with that sort of work at the reduced price; and as that saving to the individuals of the community is expended upon other goods, or given for labour of some kind, the demand for labourers cannot be diminished by

machines, if the revenue derived from them is not given for food for useless animals.

The employment of stock for saving labour in any other way (and Lord Lauderdale has shewn\* in the clearest manner, that the profits of stock, however employed to facilitate manufactures or exchanges, are obtained in consequence of the saving of labour), must produce similar consequences, therefore can have no tendency to diminish the general demand for labour. But in proportion to the number of articles which are reduced in price by the employment of stock, in machines or otherwise, the society must be better accommodated. That part of every person's wages or income, which remains after purchasing food, will purchase a greater quantity of these articles, or of a better quality.

Hence, as the proportion of the labourer's time or wages, that must be given for food, is regulated by the proportion that the quantity of food to be sold, bears to the number of buyers; so the quantity of manufactures and other conveniencies, which a labourer can purchase with what remains of his wages, after paying for food, must increase with the increase of machinery, of stock, of the

\* Enquiry into the Causes of Public Wealth.



arts of manufacturing, and with the cheapness of the materials of manufactures.

Every person who has no land must give a part of his income for food, but the remainder (which, with many in a manufacturing society, is very considerable) is given for luxuries. It is only a small part of the income of bankers, merchants, and other great owners of stock, which is given for food; by much the greater part is given for manufactures, menial service, and different kinds of luxuries; and this part must increase with the increase of the revenue which is derived from their industry, and the profits of stock.

When the revenue of individuals is greater than is requisite to purchase necessities, the surplus is expended in superfluities, as custom and taste may direct; and as vessels made of the precious metals are generally desired, it must follow that the demand for these will increase with the increase of income from manufactures; and an additional demand for these metals in the shape of coin, must also, in that case, be formed to answer the additional number of exchanges. Consequently, the number of miners employed to dig for them must increase with the increase of the demand. Hence, the quantity of these metals, or of notes promising to pay certain quantities, must be greater



in any nation, in proportion to the increase of manufactures, and as the exchanges are more numerous, and of greater value, whether the mines are more or less productive.

As no person will keep gold or silver while in want of food or other necessaries, if they are to be got in exchange, it must follow, that in proportion as these metals, or bills or bank-notes payable in gold, are in plenty among the people of low rank, food and other necessaries must also be in plenty. These metals are not the essentials of the riches of a nation; but among neighbouring nations they must abound most in those in which the people are best supplied with food and necessaries; and a scarcity of money among the labourers, is a necessary consequence of scarcity and dearness of food, and of low wages.

As there cannot be a greater number of the class of people who have no land, than the surplus food of the owners of land can maintain, it seems necessarily to follow, that, in proportion as a greater number of that class are supported by the profits of stock, there must be fewer labourers for hire; and as stock cannot be employed in any way without some labourers, the competition of the owners of stock, bidding against one another, and against the owners of land, for labourers to

assist them, must increase with the increase of stock; and labourers will obtain higher wages, according to that increase.

As the profits of the stock which is employed to save labour, are greater in proportion to the number of labourers whose work it saves, it seems necessarily to follow that they will be higher in proportion as the wages of the labourers whose work it saves are high; and consequently, that part of the profits of the *employers of stock*, which arises from saving labour by having proper tools and materials, by attention and by forming a proper division of labour (which are the means by which masters undersell single workmen who have no stock), must be high or low, according to the general rate of the wages of labourers; and as it has been shown that the wages of labourers are increased by the increase of stock employed to save labour, it must follow, that the interests of these two classes coincide, with respect to the general rate of wages, notwithstanding their having been thought by the members of both to be opposite. And this conclusion is confirmed by experience; as, in every country, where the general rate of wages is low, the profits of employers of stock, to save labour, are also low; and they are high where wages are high. In the south of Ireland, the Highlands, and the Islands of Scotland; in Poland, and in every other country, where the

general rate of wages is low, the general rate of the profits of master-tradesmen and other employers of stock is also low. Whereas in Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, and other manufacturing towns, where the general rate of wages is high, the general rate of the profits of the employers of stock is also high.

The erroneous opinion, that the profits of masters are deductions from the wages of labourers, is unfortunately too general, and is the cause of much discontent among the labourers. It is, therefore, much to be regretted that Dr Smith has so far strengthened that opinion by asserting, “ that the incomes of landlords and employers of “ stock, are deductions from the wages of la-  
“ bourers, which in justice ought to be all their “ own.”

In the beginning of his Chapter on Wages he expresses himself as follows : “ The produce of “ labour constitutes the natural recompense or “ wages of labour.

“ In that original state of things, which pre-  
“ cedes both the appropriation of land and the  
“ accumulation of stock, the whole produce of la-  
“ bour belongs to the labourer. He has neither  
“ landlord nor master to share with him.



“ Had this state continued, the wages of labour  
 “ would have augmented with all those improve-  
 “ ments in its productive powers to which the di-  
 “ vision of labour gives occasion.”

But as these productive powers are (by the Doctor's own showing in the preceding chapters) effects produced by men of capital erecting machines, and forming a proper division of labour, it is astonishing that he should suppose that these effects could be produced without the cause. In the first chapter of the first book, he says, that he saw ten men employed by a master, who made upwards of forty-eight thousand pins in a day; that each man, therefore, might be considered as making four thousand eight hundred; and that if these men had wrought separately and independent of one another, they could not have made a fiftieth part of the number. Hence, by this his own statement, though the employer got one-half of the pins as his profit, each workman might still have the other half, or twenty-five times as many pins for his share, as he could have made if working by himself. After such a particular statement of the great additional quantity of work produced by the division of labour, (and as he knew that the employment of stock and a division of labour were absolutely necessary to the formation of the metal, and saved incomparably more labour



in drawing the wire than can be saved in making the pins,) it is quite unaccountable to find the same author asserting, that the profits of the employers of stock are parts of the wages of the labourers, which are taken from them.

A labourer can get his corn ground at a mill for about one day's wages for every quarter; whereas he could not grind the same quantity himself in eight or ten days: hence it is evident, that, in this case, the labourer, by giving one day's wages to the owner of the mill, saves at least eight days wages, and has his corn much better done. Without the employment of stock and division of labour, the whole society must be reduced to the savage state, as they could not form any instruments of metal, no shears to take the fleece off their sheep, needles to sew their cloths, or an iron spade to dig the ground. The profits derived from employing stock to save labour, are payments for the labour which it saves, and are so far from lessening the wages of labourers, that it has been shown that wages are necessarily higher in every country in proportion as more stock is employed.

Accumulation of stock is not only advantageous to labourers when employed in the division of labour, and erection of machines for saving labour,

it is also of great service to that class of people, when it is employed in furnishing shops and warehouses with manufactures, by giving the manufacturers more constant employment. The demand for manufactures is extremely fluctuating, the shop-keepers and whole-sale merchants frequently selling as much in one month at one time, as in six or eight in others; but by having a stock on hand, they can answer these large demands when they come upon them, and then make up their stock gradually by buying from the manufacturers, before another great demand comes; by which means the manufacturers have a much more regular demand for their work than they could have, if all those who use manufactures, were to employ workmen on their own account to make them; as, in that case, the workmen would sometimes have too much work, and at others too little, or none at all.

When master smiths, joiners, masons, &c. are employed in repairs, or any other work, for which they charge their employers by the number of days the workmen have taken to execute it, a great deal more is charged to the employer than what is given by the master to the workmen. Yet even in this case the master's profits are not deductions from the wages of those who execute the work, they are voluntary payments by the employers to the masters for directing the work,

and for employing proper persons to execute every part which they were not judges of themselves. In the same way, when men of character in the law are employed to write deeds, it is common, not only to charge for drawing the deeds, but also a much larger sum for transcribing, than is paid to the clerk; yet the surcharge in this case is not a deduction from the clerk's wages, it is given to the lawyer as a reward, to engage a man of his known talents and integrity to execute the deed, So that the profits of masters are very seldom, if ever, deductions from the wages of labourers.

The condition of labourers of inferior talents is very much ameliorated, by masters employing a considerable number of labourers, as they can, by that means, form a proper division of labour, and give such labourers employment in some way suited to their inferior abilities. If they are not fit to build a house, they can serve them who are fit,

Thus it appears that employment of stock is, in various ways, of the highest advantage to the class of labourers, by raising men of talents and virtue to affluence, and by preventing those who are deficient in talents from sinking to want and beggary; and that the profits of employers of stock are not deductions from the wages of labourers, but are rewards for talents, industry,



and integrity, and for the labour which is saved by the use of the stock; and Lord Lauderdale has shown\*, that these payments never can rise above the wages of the labourers whose work it saves, as the productions of labourers prevent the prices of the goods from rising higher; and it has been noticed, that the competition of capital prevents its profits in any line from continuing above the ordinary level, however much labour it may save.

In the first volume of his *Wealth of Nations*, page 134 and 135, Dr Smith says, "It may be laid down as a maxim, that wherever a great deal can be made by the use of money, a great deal will commonly be given for the use of it; and that, wherever little can be made by it, less will commonly be given for it. According, therefore, as the usual market rate of interest varies in any country, we may be assured, that the ordinary profits of stock must vary with it,—must sink as it sinks, and rise as it rises. The progress of interest, therefore, may lead us to form some notion of profit."

The maxim which the Doctor lays down in the first sentence of this quotation is just, but the conclusions which he draws from it in the two

\* *Enquiry into the Origin of Public Wealth*, p. 165.

already done.



last sentences are erroneous. He had forgot that the profits gained by the use of money, must not only pay the interest, but also the person who employs it, for his trouble; and that this part will vary with the general rate of wages and of the profits of employers of stock.

In a poor populous country, in which there are no manufactures, where few can earn a living except by common labour, if a man who can only gain ten pounds a year, by hard labour, can with the use of a hundred pounds gain thirty pounds, in an easier way, he will rather give twenty pounds a year, as interest, than want the money. But in a rich manufacturing country, a man who can gain eighty or an hundred pounds a year as a clerk or manager to men of capital, will not borrow money, unless the profits derived from the use of it, after paying the interest, shall leave him an income of eighty or a hundred pounds a year; nor will men of capital borrow money to extend their business, unless the profits are likely to pay them for their labour, at the usual rate, besides the interest.

The Doctor, in the 140th page of his first volume, says, "That where wages are high interest is low, except in the peculiar circumstances of new colonies." And it has been shown, that

where wages are high, the profits of *employers of stock* are also high. And in the 172d page of the same volume, he says, “ That, in a small sea-port town, a grocer will make 40 or 50 per cent. upon the stock of a single L. 100, while a considerable wholesale merchant, in the same place, will scarcely make 8 or 10 per cent. upon a stock of L. 10,000.”—The Doctor ought to have observed, that, by the explanation which he gives in the same page, of the cause of the great difference in the profits of these trades, the greatest part of the profits of the grocer is considered as only reasonable wages for a man properly qualified for such a business; that, notwithstanding the high profit made by the money, the grocer, if in good credit, would only give the same interest as the wholesale merchant; which shows, that as the wages or profits of the employers of stock are high, a smaller part of the profits are given as interest; and contradicts his conclusion, that the profits of stock must be high or low as interest is high or low.

The rate of interest must in every country be high or low, according as the quantity of stock to be lent is less or more in proportion to the demand by those who wish to borrow, and can pay the interest. Hence, in a populous manufacturing commercial nation, where wages of labour

and profits of employers of stock are high, and in which there is little or no increase of people to employ accumulating capital, (as in England, and formerly in Holland,) its accumulation (when not wasted by war or otherwise) must reduce the rate of interest, and has reduced it in these countries to three, and, sometimes, to two per cent.; whereas, in populous countries, where there are no manufactures, and very little stock, and where few labourers are employed except in agriculture, as was generally the case in Europe in former ages, the labourers and tenants, in such countries, are in extreme poverty; very few of them can accumulate capital, while, from the general poverty, many desire to borrow, which must raise the rate of interest. Hence it appears, that a fall in the rate of interest must be a certain sign of increasing wealth, and that the wages of labour, and the profits of the *employers of stock*, are increasing. In new colonies, however, where the accumulated stock is laid out on improving land, as what is laid out in that way, cannot afterwards be lent to supply the wants of those who wish to borrow, it is obvious, that, as long as high profits are made by improving land, and a great demand for money to be expended in that line, interest may be very high, though the wages of labour, and the profits of employers of stock, are also high.



As it appears, that the profits of the *employers* of stock are in general high, in proportion as interest is low, and *vice versa*, the inducement that owners of stock have to employ it themselves is increased by the fall of interest, not only by that fall lessening the income derived from lending it, but also by the profits to be expected from employing it themselves being greater; and high interest must have a contrary effect.

If there is not a sufficient quantity of food to be got to supply the inhabitants, the price will rise as wages rise. For as the price can only rise in proportion to the ability of the buyers, in proportion, therefore, as wages are high, the labourers are enabled to continue the competition to a higher price. When food rises in price, the lowest class must buy less; and as butcher's meat is, in populous countries, the dearest article, they begin with buying less of it, but continue to buy a full quantity of bread as long as their wages will pay for it and tolerable clothing; and they gradually lessen their quantities of butcher's meat and clothes as bread rises in price, until they are obliged to give up butcher's meat altogether, that they may be enabled to buy bread and some clothes. Hence, the competition for butcher's meat and clothes must increase with the increase of wages, and decrease as the price of bread rises.



Dr Smith has justly observed\*, “ that the advantages and disadvantages of the different employments of labour and stock must, in the same neighbourhood, be either perfectly equal, or continually tending to equality. If, in the same neighbourhood, there was any employment evidently either more or less advantageous than the rest, so many people would crowd into it, in the one case, and so many would desert it, in the other, that its advantages would soon return to the level of other employments.”

Hence, though the exchanges among the employers of stock are great and complicated,—though many classes of them are wholly employed by other classes,—though each class wishes to sell their goods as high, and to buy those of others as low as possible,—and though the wages and profits may rise very much in some employments, and fall in others, yet, as they must be constantly tending to a level, the general rate of wages or profits of stock cannot be affected by these exchanges.

Considerable exchanges must also be carried on, in such a society as we have supposed, among the owners of land, in different kinds of food or

\* Wealth of Nations, Vol. I. page 151.

produce, which individuals require for their families and other purposes, according as they have more or less of their land under particular crops, or in grass; and a much greater exchange is frequently carried on, among the people of that class, in the different kinds of domestic animals,—some judging it best to rear and sell them when young, to others who keep them a year or more, and then sell them to those who feed them, and sell them to butchers.

By this intercourse, it is obvious, that there are many considerable exchanges among the owners of land, and that many of them sell the whole of their spare produce to other owners of land. But in these exchanges the value of the different productions of land must constantly tend to a level, like the profits of stock and wages of labour: for, if too much of any article is raised, more of it must be given for other articles of which less is raised in proportion to the demand; but as part of the land, upon which the article was raised, which is in too great plenty, will be employed to raise such articles as are more scarce in proportion to the demand, the value of the different crops, and kinds of domestic animals, in proportion to the quality and condition of the land, will be constantly tending to a level. But if the whole quantity of food and other necessary productions of

land, which are to be sold to those who have no land, be too great for the demand, their price must fall, and if the quantity be too small to supply that demand, the price will rise; and whether the price to those who have no land rise or fall, the price given by one owner of land to another must also rise or fall. The exchanges which the owners of land make among themselves, as they neither augment or diminish the quantity of food or other produce to be sold to those who have no land, can have no effect upon their general price, or on the quantities of manufacture or labour which they can purchase. These must be regulated by the proportion that the whole quantity of food and other necessities, which the owners of land have to sell (after supplying one another), bears to the number of those who must buy these productions with money, manufactures, or labour.

Thus it appears, that in a country where all the land is occupied, the interest of the owners of land, with respect to the price of its produce, is directly opposite to the interest of those who have no land, and must buy its productions with manufactures or labour.

When the produce of land is in plenty, less labour, or a smaller quantity of manufactures, will be given for it; and when it is scarce, more must



be given for it, in proportion to that scarcity. Every individual of those who have no land must have less of his work, wages, or income, remaining to purchase manufactures and other conveniences, in proportion as he gives much for food and other necessary productions of land. Consequently, as the price of that produce must rise and fall according as the quantity is small or great, in proportion to the number of those who have no land, the share of the labourers wages or time, which must be given for food and other necessary productions of land, is regulated in the same manner in an insulated manufacturing society, as if that society were living in the most simple state.

When the produce of land becomes scarce and dear, if there is plenty of fertile land in the neighbourhood unoccupied, as in new settlements, so many people will engage in its cultivation, that the profits of cultivating a person's own land will be kept upon a level with the profits of stock in other lines of business. But in a populous country, where all the land is occupied, however high the price of its produce may rise, as there is no more land for more people to cultivate, to increase the quantity of produce, and by competition reduce its price, that can only be effected by the owners of the land cultivating their several shares so as to produce more, or giving proper encou-



agement to others to do it. It seems therefore to follow, that the number and welfare of an insulated nation must depend upon the inducements that the occupiers have to increase the produce of land, and that it is the want of unoccupied land which constitutes the owners of the land a separate class from those who have no land, and occasions the interests of those two classes, respecting the price of its produce, to be opposite.

It can make no difference in these conclusions, whether the land is cultivated by the owners themselves, as here supposed, or let to tenants. For, though the high price of the productions of land is in favour of the tenants during their leases, yet, cheapness of these productions must ultimately serve them and the labourers in the country, as much as the masters and labourers in towns; because, if wages are higher in the country than in the towns, more labourers will go into the country, until wages come to a level; or, if the profits of farmers rise above the rate of profits in other professions, more people or stock will go into that line, and the competition for farms will raise the rent of land, but will reduce the profits of farmers to a level with the profits of stock in other professions. Hence, as the profits of masters, and the wages of labourers, rise or fall in the towns, they must ultimately rise or fall in the

neighbouring country, if there are no laws to prevent competition. No kind of manufacture can be increased in quantity without an increase in the quantity of the materials of which it is made. Hence, if the materials of any one become scarce in proportion to the demand, it will rise in price. But as the profits of stock and wages of labourers, employed in that branch, cannot continue above the profit and wages in other branches, the price of the goods can only be raised permanently in proportion to the rise of the materials : the owners of the materials, therefore, will obtain the whole advance in the price of the goods, and their interest respecting the price of these goods will be opposite to the interest of the rest of the society ; in the same manner as the owners of land obtain the whole advance in the price of its produce, which is occasioned by the want of land to supply an increasing number of people, and as their interest is opposite, in that particular, to the interest of those who have no land.

If the foregoing reasoning be just, it must be evident that plenty or scarcity of fuel, wool, flax, leather, timber, and every other production of land which is necessary for the clothing and convenience of man, must produce similar effects upon the class of people who have no land, as plenty or scarcity of food, but in a much smaller de-

gree. Not only because the quantity of these articles, which is necessary, is of much less value, but also because a full quantity is not absolutely necessary in any climate, and in proportion as the climate is warm, fewer of these articles and smaller quantities are necessary.

It seems, therefore, to be evident, that those who have no land, in an insulated country, must be poorer according as their number is greater, in proportion to the spare produce of the owners of land, *which is exchanged with them for labour or manufactures*, in whatever state arts and manufactures may be. And it must follow, that where the produce of food is only sufficient to supply the present inhabitants, they must become poorer in proportion as the increase of their number exceeds the increase of food, and that the labourers of countries fully peopled, in proportion to their produce, must become poorest in which their tendency to increase beyond the increase of food is greatest.

Hence, as experience evinces, that the number of people decreases in all very large cities, and is stationary in smaller cities, that they increase slower in towns in proportion as they are large, and slower even in the country in proportion as families live near one another and near towns,—it



seems to follow, that in an insulated country, which is fully peopled in proportion to its produce, the tendency to over-populousness must be greater, in proportion as it maintains fewer people, *and as fewer people live in towns.*

It must therefore be of the greatest importance to the welfare of mankind, to ascertain what general regulations are most conducive to the comfortable support of a numerous population.

## S E C T. II.

### *Of the Effects of Manufactures upon Agriculture.*

As the supporters of what is called the agricultural system assert, that no labour is productive, or enriches a country, but that which increases the quantity of food, it was natural to expect that the causes which obstruct or promote that increase would be clearly pointed out in their writings. But though men of great talents have adopted these opinions, yet not one of them, whose writings I have met with, seems to have attended to these material causes. They support their paradoxical opinion, respecting the total unproductiveness of manufacturing labour, by unfounded assertions; that the labour of artificers and manufacturers adds nothing to the value of the pro-



duce of the land, because, though it may add greatly to the value of some parts, the consumption of food by the workers, being always equal to the added value, the value of the whole is not augmented.

But this is assuming, as certain, that the relative value of labour and of the produce of land is always the same; in America, where food is in great plenty, and labourers scarce, as in countries in opposite circumstances, which is not the case, and it is also assuming, that the value of the food of each worker, and set of workers, is exactly equal to the value of the work which they execute, which is absurd; as some individual workers execute double the work of others who consume more food, and a number of men, by a proper division of their labour, can execute three or four times more than they could have done if each had finished his own work, and that without consuming any more food. And a number of men, by the assistance of machinery, and the elements, can, without consuming any more food than ordinary, execute twenty times more work than they could execute by the most prudent division of labour without such assistance. To assert, that the value of the work in all these cases is exactly equal to the value of the subsistence of the labourer who execute it, is ridiculous in the extreme.

So far is the labour employed in arts and manufactures from being necessarily of inferior value to labour in cultivation, it must, on the contrary, at all times and places, precede every effectual attempt to increase food by cultivation. For, as men cannot cultivate the ground without some instrument, art and manufacturing labour must be employed to form instruments before any cultivation can be executed, and according as improvements have been made in these instruments, the produce of the labour of cultivators has been increased. And these improvements can only increase with the general improvements in manufactures. By the assistance of an iron spade, which requires much art and manufacturing labour, above ten times more work can be done than with a wooden spade, and to much better purpose. And the construction of ploughs, harrows, and carts, by which men obtain the assistance of domestic animals, has been of the highest importance to the success of agriculture. M. du Quesnai, who is said to be the founder of the agricultural system, and his followers, seem to have been led into erroneous ideas of the nature and effects of manufacturing labour, by observing, that the people employed in unnecessary manufactures do not increase the quantity of food, and that *if they were employed in improving the land, they would increase the quantity*, from which they have erro-

neously concluded, that if they were not employed in manufactures, they would certainly be employed in cultivation, and have been confirmed in these sentiments by fallacious positions. Mr Malthus, who seems to be a strenuous advocate for that system, says, “ that if the people who are employed in producing manufactures, which only tend to gratify the pride of a few rich people, were employed in cultivating the lands which are barren and uncultivated, more food would be produced.” But though this is certainly true, yet unless he had pointed out the means of eradicating the passion in rich people for useless finery, and of infusing in its stead a passion equally strong for improving waste land, the statement can be of no use but to deceive, by conveying the idea, that if there were no such manufactures, rich people would bestow their spare revenue upon improving land, which in the present state of human nature could not be expected.

When examining what regulations are most proper for increasing the quantity of food, it seems to be necessary to bear in mind, that man makes no exertion unless it is to gratify some passion, or to shun some evil. From which principle it must follow, that when individuals are in the possession of extensive tracts of land, if they are not allowed, or have not a desire to gratify their pride by



vying with one another in the number of their dependents, and the greatness of their power, and if there are no manufactures which they desire to obtain, they have no inducement, on their own account, to cultivate or to let any more of their land than what is necessary for their families, servants, horses, &c. The remainder may be expected to be left to wild beasts, the hunting of which will constitute a part of the amusement of the owners of the lands. And the people who cannot obtain land or employment from the owners, and have no land of their own, must subsist by begging or stealing, or die of hunger.

In warm, mild climates, where few clothes are necessary, where tents answer for houses, and where the bread-fruit and other kinds of fruit trees with a few hogs, supply the owners of land with food, and where they have no horses or flocks to attend and provide for, as in many of the south sea islands, if there are no manufactures, there must be very little demand for labourers, which is probably the cause of the extreme poverty, and abject dependence, which the greater part of the people of these fertile countries are said to be in; while a few are living in a voluptuous manner on the natural productions of their land. The owners in such situations have no inducement to cultivate the land themselves, or to let it to others



for cultivation. And as a tent cannot be pitched, or a boat built, without obtaining liberty and materials from an owner of land, however plentiful fish may be upon the coast, the people can derive very little benefit from that circumstance, without liberty from the owners of the land.

A desire of power to protect themselves, and to domineer over their dependents and neighbours, was the motive which formerly induced the proprietors in Europe to let a great part of their land. But as their pride naturally increased with the number of their dependents, it could not be expected that they would attend to the cultivation of their estates to increase the produce. Nor could it be expected, that the occupiers, who obtained their possessions upon the condition of military or some other servile tenure, and who held their land only during pleasure, would be at any trouble or expence to improve it; on the contrary, they would be led by their own interest to crop it in such a way as was most likely to produce the greatest quantity of food with little labour in the current year, however much it might impoverish the land. Accordingly, there is not one instance of a country being well cultivated where the owners and occupiers of the land are only influenced respectively by these motives. No person can be expected to cultivate, or let more land than is

necessary to supply him with such productions as he desires for his own use, or to give to others gratuitously, or for such services or articles as he wishes to obtain.

It has formerly been observed, that in a simple state of society, the people who have no land depend entirely upon the owners of land, not only for food and materials for clothes, but also for a house to live in, and having nothing wherewith to purchase these necessaries, they can only expect to obtain them by the most obsequious service and cringing behaviour ; but people in manufacturing towns obtain houses of their own, or for rent, without becoming dependents upon any individual, and though they cannot produce food or materials for manufactures, they, with the assistance of machines and stock, produce a superfluity of many articles which are necessary to the comfort and convenience of man, and many articles of show and taste that men desire, which it is the interest of the owners of land to purchase with their spare produce, rather than to attempt to make them. So that the exchange of the produce of land for manufactures, is equally beneficial to the owners of land and to manufacturers ; neither of these classes is under any direct obligation to the other for the benefits derived from it, as the motives with both are to serve themselves.

To accomplish this exchange in the most beneficial manner for both parties, the produce of the land, after supplying the owners and cultivators, is carried to the towns and sold to the highest bidder, and the owners, with the price, buy such manufactures as they think proper from those who have the best and cheapest. Hence, as both classes sell as high and buy as low as they can, the manufacturers, shop-keepers, &c. depend upon their own prudence and skill for employment; and as they sell in general a much greater quantity of their goods to people of their own class, than to owners of land, they are under no greater obligations to customers of the latter class than to those of their own; and the owners of stock have as much influence, in proportion to their revenue, with shop-keepers, tradesmen, and common labourers, as the owners of land. The revenue of the latter class arises from the sale of food and materials of manufactures, which are the produce of their land, that of the former from the sale of necessary and ornamental manufactures, and professional skill, which are the produce of their labour, stock, and talents.

Thus, it must be obvious, that establishing manufactures in independent towns, has not only a powerful tendency to improve the arts and sciences, and to render manufactures plentiful, but also to



emancipate the people living in these towns. It was the riches and independence of that class of people in Europe which enabled and emboldened them to form associations among themselves, in some countries, and to join with the kings, in others, to compel the greatest owners of land to submit to general laws, founded, in some degree, upon equitable principles.

When the owners of land in Europe were thus prevented from vying with one another in power, they were, by the natural pride of man, induced to vie with one another, and with the rich burghers, in dress, furniture, houses, and other productions of the arts. To support that expence, they were obliged to improve their estates themselves, or to let them for a term of years to others who could improve them, and pay higher rents than tenants at will; for which purpose the length of leases was gradually extended, and it became necessary to form laws to secure the possessions to the tenants, which rendered them less dependent upon the owners. So that establishing manufactures, not only emancipates and enriches the people in the towns, but also emancipates and enriches, in a considerable degree, the tenants and labourers in the country. As security of property is the strongest inducement to industry, the tenants, having acquired some security, gradually accumu-



lated stock, and obtained credit to borrow stock, to extend their improvements in liming, marling, inclosing, &c. By these means, the productions of land have been greatly increased in Britain, and in many extensive tracts, to five, ten, fifteen, and some even to twenty times the former quantity. Yet the number of manufacturers, the quantity of stock, and improvements in the art of manufacturing, have increased so rapidly, that the demand for food by people who had wherewith to pay for it has increased faster than the supply from the improvement of land; on which account food has gradually advanced in price to double, and, for several years past, to treble of what it was sixty or seventy years ago, notwithstanding its very great increase in Britain during that period, and that there has been for several years a considerable importation.

Thus it appears, that so far are manufactures from preventing the production of food, that by the inducements which are thereby formed for exertions in agriculture, the produce of food is increased in a very high degree, which occasions a proportional increase in the revenue of the owners of land, and supports a greater number of people; and as a greater proportion of these people live in cities and towns, both these latter effects must operate powerfully in checking over-popula-

tion, and consequently, by preventing a scarcity of food, must meliorate the condition of labourers.

Even the injury to health, which is occasioned by the situation of some manufacturers, produces incomparably less misery, than what the whole class of labourers suffer in every country fully peopled, in proportion to the produce, in which there are no manufactures; as appears evident by comparing the state of the labourers in these kinds of manufactures, with that of the labourers in Shetland, and other distant islands of Scotland, or even with that of the labourers in the south-west of Ireland, and Highlands of Scotland, at a distance from manufacturing towns, although the state of the latter is mitigated by some of them emigrating to such towns.

The effect of manufactures upon the condition of labourers can only be determined by such comparisons, and not by comparing the condition of manufacturers with that of agricultural labourers in England, where the condition of the latter is so much meliorated by the effects of manufactures. Yet even in England, though there are a great many more manufacturers than country labourers, a much greater number of the children of the latter are bred to manufactures, than there are of the

former bred to country labour. This fact is a decisive proof, that, in the opinion of these people the situation of manufacturers is much better than that of country labourers.

### S E C T. III.

#### *Causes which obstruct improvements in Agriculture in Britain.*

BUT it is necessary to observe, that the motives to exertion in cultivating the land, which are formed by establishing manufactures, are unfortunately counteracted in a very high degree, in most countries, by laws and customs originating in the natural avarice, pride, and vanity of man.

To be obliged by law to pay a 10th of the produce of land to some other person or persons, must be a considerable check to cultivation, and particularly to all expensive improvements, and the effect must be greater in proportion as the soil is poor, as the expence of cultivation is in that case greater in proportion to the produce. It is very fortunate, however, that this law which, on poor soils, would put a total stop to cultivation, is, in general, mitigated, by its being the interest of the owners of the tithes to let them for a term of years to the



occupiers of the land, in which case, the checks to cultivation, which are formed by the law of tithes, seem to be nearly the same as those which all tenants labour under who possess land upon leases.

Where the land is rich, and where no improvements which only repay the cost gradually are requisite, it is the interest of the tenant to cultivate it properly, although there are only two or three years of his lease to run, but where such improvements are necessary, the tenant cannot lay out money on these, unless his lease is of such a length that the probable returns will pay the interest with an adequate profit, and also make up the sum expended before the lease expires. Consequently, the shorter the lease is, the greater must the returns be to repay the sum expended with interest and profit.

Five per cent. per annum, which is at present the legal interest, is a sufficient return for money expended by the owner upon lasting improvements, as it raises the value of his land more than the sum expended ; whereas ten per cent. only repays the outlay to a tenant, upon a lease of fifteen years ; and the tenant ought to have at least five per cent. more as profit, making in all fifteen per cent. So that improvements which would be high-



ly profitable to the owner, may be ruinous to a tenant, and the more so in proportion to the shortness of the lease when the expenditure is made. The inducement, therefore, to lay out money upon lasting improvements becomes gradually less, as the lease becomes shorter; and the exertions of tenants in such improvements may be expected to lessen in proportion.

Besides these obstructions to improvements of land by tenants, which are greater in proportion to the shortness of the lease, and poorness of the soil, there are many others which *form checks to the exertions of tenants, and deter men of capital and enterprize from engaging in agriculture.*

The owners of land in Britain have prevailed with the legislature to enact laws, by which it is generally understood that every proprietor has a right, not only for himself, but to give liberty to any person, to go over his land which is let to tenants, (whether inclosed or open) on foot, or on horseback, to kill animals which they call game, whenever they think proper, and this supposed right has been admitted and generally exercised, while the tenant is debarred by heavy penalties from killing any of these creatures, however much he may be suffering by them, and though no individual can claim them as his property, or be

made liable for the damages they commit. Nor can the tenant prevent these vexatious and insulting intrusions ; he has only a chance of obtaining such damages as he can prove in a court of law, which, though considerable, cannot, in general, be expected to be equal to the expence of the proof, and the fees of the court and lawyers.

Tenants are, in general, in Scotland, obliged to pay the whole that their farm is charged with, towards repairing the roads, and a half of the poors rates, and of the salary of the parish school-master, yet have no vote in these matters, however considerable their farms may be, while every owner of a piece of land in the parish has a vote, although he may be a common labourer.

Refusing to give tenants a vote in these matters, in which they are so deeply interested, and of the nature of which they must, in general, be better judges than many land owners, or to give them a liberty to kill a hare which is fed at their expence, can only proceed from a lust of power and pre-eminence, and a desire to degrade and humble the tenants.

A lease of land is, by law, of the nature of an entail, descending clear to the heir, and tenants are, in general, debarred from subsetting, or as-

signing even to a younger brother of the heir, however improper it may be for the heir to inherit. Hence, in case of death, or incapacity from disease, a tenant has no power to assign or burden his farm with the money he may have expended upon it, without the consent of his master, (as the landlord is generally designed in Scotland,) and it is common for these masters to demand a large share of the advanced rent for granting that liberty; nor can creditors obtain payment of money lent to improve the land, either by possessing or subsetting the farm, which, in many instances, is ruinous to the farmer by lessening his credit. The only plausible pretence for such a clause is, to prevent the tenant from assigning to an improper person; but this pretence is only *plausible*, as the landlord has no power whatever to chuse the heir. But admitting this to be a good reason for inserting the clause with proper limitations, yet it is unjust and mean in the extreme for a master to extort money from his tenant, or from his family, for such a liberty, when the offered assignee or subtenant is unobjectionable, as the end for inserting the clause is, in that case, obtained. Such clauses are great checks to expensive improvement of land, and to the increase of food; and many families have, in that way, been defrauded of the fruits of the exertions of their parents and relations.



As men do not necessarily possess abilities in proportion to their different degrees of riches, and as the number of tenants in Britain is much greater than the number of landlords, it frequently happens that some of the tenants have greater abilities and more knowledge than their landlords or stewards; and as superior talents naturally command respect, the pride of the latter is hurt by the check which they are under in the presence of such tenants: Besides, as a desire for pre-eminence operates powerfully upon men of talents and enterprize to increase their fortune, and as such increase makes them more independent, such men not only eclipse their landlord or steward by their mental powers, but they come too near them in their dress and furniture, and behave in too independent a manner. It is to avoid the painful feelings occasioned by these causes, and to have their pride gratified by cringing sycophants, that so many landlords and stewards give no leases, or very short ones, and prefer tenants of fawning manners at lower rents. They give up the prospect of seeing their lands improved, rather than let them on lease to independent men of talents and enterprize.

This evil is much more general, and has a more powerful effect in checking the improvement of land in Britain than is imagined; the produce of



many estates not being above a half, and of many not a fourth of what it otherwise might be. And besides that great loss, the motives for exertion to improve their farms, is powerfully checked in the tenants who are on these accounts preferred, by the fear of giving umbrage to their landlords and stewards, if they improve in their manners, in their dress or furniture, or give their children proper education. Hence it is common in England to see rich farmers dressed like common labourers, very little acquainted with writing or arithmetic, and many who cannot read distinctly, who, to please their landlords and stewards, affect to despise every improvement of mind or manners, and only vie with one another in rusticity, in the number and fatness of their horses, and in drinking ale. So that the passion for power and pre-eminence in landlords and stewards not only prevents the production of food, but also has a great effect in wasting that which is produced, and in obstructing the improvement of the minds and manners of the people employed in agriculture.

Mr Arthur Young says, " That the land is " worst cultivated, both in England and France, " in the manufacturing districts," and seems to infer, that establishing manufactures discourages agriculture. But when the laws and customs, so injurious, vexatious, and degrading to tenants, that

have been mentioned, are considered, (and there are many of a similar tendency respecting political rights even in Britain,) we ought not to be surprized that the improvements of land are carried to a higher pitch in some parts of France and Britain, at a distance from manufacturing or trading towns, than in the vicinity of such towns. Because few men of spirit and capital will submit to the degrading circumstances which attend the situation of tenants, when they have it in their power to employ their capital to equal advantage in a town, where they will be free not only from these, but also from the power of justices of the peace, which is too often exercised in a most tyrannical manner, particularly against tenants of independent spirit: whereas tenants of talents and enterprize, who accumulate capitals in districts at a distance from the seats of manufactures or trade, however sensibly they may feel the degrading circumstances which attend their situation, have no way of employing these capitals with any prospect of success but in their own line; on this account, some tenants in such situations have made much greater improvements than can be expected from such men as continue in the farming line near trading towns. But even in these districts where improvements are carried on to the greatest height, young men of the greatest talents and enterprize seldom go into the

farming line. Mr Young should have considered, that the exertions in agriculture, by farmers of spirit and enterprize, who live at a distance from manufacturing or trading towns, are made to obtain manufactures and luxuries; that, if that motive did not operate upon the Americans, none of the productions of their land would come to Europe, as in that case they would only raise such produce, and in such quantities, as might be necessary for their own use. So that, in every point of view, it seems evident, that establishing manufactures is the only method to emancipate the people who have no land, by furnishing them with articles wherewith to purchase the necessary productions of land, and forms the strongest inducements to the owners and occupiers to increase these productions.

The occupiers of land upon a feu-right, though at full rent, are not, in Scotland, liable to the degrading laws which are so vexatious to tenants; and as they have a full right to the whole fruits of their industry, and to the woods upon the lands, and as the rent cannot be raised, they have the same inducement to improve their land, as the proprietors (who are tenants of the Crown) have to improve theirs.



It seems, therefore, to be plain, that the laws of entails, of primogeniture, of tithes, and allowing people to possess more land than they can occupy, without being obliged to let it in feu, have, in various ways, powerful effects in preventing the improvement of land and increase of food; and that these effects, which impoverish the labourers, are greater in proportion as the soil of the country is poor.

#### S E C T. IV,

*Of the Causes of Improvements in Societies; and on the Effects of Plenty and Scarcity of Food upon the Industry of Labourers.*

NECESSITY is said to be the mother of invention, and the most powerful cause of exertion. But such exertions can only be expected to be made while the cause continues to operate. To remove the pain which is the consequence of a great degree of hunger or thirst, of cold or heat, every person will exert himself to the utmost. But after the pain, occasioned by these causes, is removed, very few savages make any considerable exertion to prevent a return. It appears from experience, that mankind in general make great exertions to be equal with their neighbours, but



have little or no desire to excel; that a few in every society are ambitious to excel, and succeed in proportion to the superiority of their talents and exertions. And it seems probable that the great difference, in the celerity and extent of the advances in improvement of manufacturing nations, when compared with that of nations in a savage or simple state, is entirely owing to the difference in the opportunities which those passions have to operate, and in the consequences which they produce.

In the savage state, as there is no difference in point of fortune among the individuals, men of talents and enterprize can only endeavour to excel their neighbours in bravery and skill in war; in dexterity in killing wild animals, or in athletic exercises; none of which lead to any national improvement. And even in such civilized agricultural societies, as Poland, &c. the principal ambition of the owners of land is to domineer over their dependents and neighbours; and the sole view of those who have no land is to please their superiors, by the most abject cringing behaviour, and by affecting to be as much inferior in mental and bodily powers, as in riches. So that few durable improvements can be expected in such societies. But in a country where manufactures are established, and property secure, the ambition

of men of talents in every line, has an opportunity of exerting itself, to excel their neighbours in dress, houses, furniture, and in the arts and sciences, &c.; and the people of a different description are obliged to exert themselves to appear in some degree like those who have excelled. By which means, there is a cause of general improvement, constantly operating, in every manufacturing society in which the persons and property of individuals are secure. And these exertions must be greater in proportion to the opportunities of comparison. People in general, though careless about their dress when in retired situations, will exert themselves to make a proper appearance when they expect company, and the exertion will be greater, if the visitors are supposed to be attentive to dress, &c. A tradesman, in a very retired situation, may go on for years in his usual aukward manner of working, without attempting to adopt better methods; but if brought to work in a town, where better methods are in general use, he will exert himself to be equal with his neighbours. Hence, the great advantage of establishing free towns for improving the manufacturing arts, and of prizes to those who excel in any art or science. These have been the causes of the great improvements at which some manufactures have arrived in Britain, and they may

still arrive at much greater, if not prevented by war or an oppressive government.

It also appears, that the exertions of men to be equal with their neighbours, or to obtain any other purpose, are only made while there is hope of success.

When food begins to advance higher in price than usual, many labourers increase their exertions to procure the usual quantity; and as many who have small incomes are obliged, by the same cause, to hire as labourers, employment becomes scarce, wages become lower, and labourers more submissive. On these accounts, the employers of labourers have considered a rise on the price of food as an advantage to the society, by encouraging industry and good manners in the low classes; not considering, that these exertions cannot be lasting, as they must exhaust the labourers; that when the price of food continues very high in proportion to the wages of labour, and the labourers have no way of relieving themselves by emigration or otherwise, their spirits naturally sink, which gradually induces greater numbers to give up the struggle to support themselves as formerly, and, falling into slothful habits, they gradually lose the spirit of independence, and become habituated to subsist entirely at the expence



of the parish, or by begging; and as the number of beggars increases, the shame attached to that way of obtaining food decreases, which lessens the motives for exertions to subsist by their own work. So that dearness of food must discourage industry.

It is admitted that, when the price of food falls suddenly below the usual rate, idle individuals work less, having no wish for better clothes or conveniencies than those to which they have been accustomed; and employers of labourers, on that account, say, that cheapness of food produces idleness. But they do not reflect, that, when cheapness of food and high wages continue steadily for years in a manufacturing country, the whole class of labourers become accustomed to better clothes, houses, and other conveniencies; and then even the idle are obliged to exert themselves to appear like their neighbours. It is only custom and the fear of ridicule that, in every situation, stimulate such persons to industry. Dr Smith says, justly, that industry, like every other quality of the human mind, increases with the increase of its reward; consequently, cheapness of food cannot be a cause of idleness in a manufacturing country; and the labourers accordingly are, in every country, industrious, in general, in proportion as labour is well or ill rewarded. They

are much more industrious in the north than in the south of Ireland; in England and in the south of Scotland, than in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland; in Holland, than in Russia or Poland.

People living at their ease, and who never knew how terrible the near view of want is, have argued that, if the labourers lay out their high wages on fine dress and conveniencies, their condition is not improved, as the advance of their wages is expended upon luxuries. But such persons ought to reflect how hard they would think it to have their own income reduced, and be obliged to give up any of their luxuries. And it should always be kept in mind, that the more labourers have to lay out on what such people call luxuries, the farther they are removed from the want of necessaries. When the reward of labour is very low, every common labourer is on the brink of absolute want; an additional child, or a few weeks' sickness, reduces them to beggary,

SECT. V. That establishing Manufactures is more beneficial to the Poor, than a Division of Land and Stock.

*That establishing Manufactures is more beneficial to the Poor, than a Division of Land and Stock.*

As some humane persons have thought, that in justice, land and stock should be equally divided, it seems proper here to observe, that the establishing of manufactures in free towns, and removing obstructions to cultivation, though the land be in a considerable degree unequally divided, appears to be much more beneficial to labourers, than any attempt at an equal division of property, which must exclude manufactures and all ambition to excel in dress, &c.

For though land, with the stock upon it, could be so equally divided, that each person's share should be sufficient to maintain him (which seems to be impossible in an extensive, populous country), still, as some families are increasing and some decreasing, in a very little time, some would have too little land, and others too much. In the latter case, if the owner has no desire to purchase superfluous luxuries, he can have no motive to induce him to raise more food than is necessary for his family, nor can it be expected that he will



give, nor would it be proper to oblige him to sell, a part of his land to those whose families have increased, as he may, in a few years, have occasion for it himself. So that the produce of the people's lots who have no family, from the want of cultivation, would only be sufficient to maintain the owners, while the additional people upon other lots were starving for want of land to cultivate. But in a country where manufactures are established, the desire for fine kinds and greater variety, induces the owners of considerable quantities of land to exert themselves to cultivate every part of it in the best manner, to increase their spare produce to purchase them; and in proportion as food becomes scarce and dear, the motives for increasing the quantity become stronger. On the other hand, those who have no land, and the children of those who have too little, by applying to manufactures, obtain good wages, and by degrees accumulate stock, from which they derive profit, with which they purchase food and other necessary productions of land, from those who have them to spare.

Establishing manufactures, therefore, though the land be in a considerable degree unequally divided, must have a much more powerful tendency to increase the productions of land, and to supply those who have no land with those pro-

ductions, than can be effected, in a populous country, by an attempt to divide the land and stock into equal shares.

#### S E C T. VI.

*Of the Waste of Food, by an extravagant Mode of Living, and of Excess in Saving.*

IN the first section of this chapter it appeared, that employing stock in machinery, or in any other way, to save labour, does not lessen the demand for labourers, if the profits derived from it are not expended upon useless animals; but, unfortunately, a considerable part of these profits are laid out in that way; and as these animals consume the food which otherwise might have gone for the support of men, the number of the latter must be less in proportion to the increase of these animals. Hence the effect of the great owners of land living in the country upon their estates, which always occasions a great increase of these animals, instead of being beneficial to a manufacturing society, as has been thought, must have a great effect in lessening the quantity of food for man, and the number of the people; as each horse, kept for pleasure, consumes more food than would support a man, with a wife, and three

or four children ; and three or four hounds consume as much food as a horse.

When gentlemen live on their estates, every person sees that they give employment to several labourers, but they seldom reflect, that the part of the income which is given to these labourers, would, in a manufacturing society, support an equal number in some other line, if the gentlemen were living in a town. The food which is given to horses and dogs, which a gentleman must keep in the country for his amusement, and to the horses necessary for visiting, for making ponds, levelling heights, and raising mounds in pleasure-grounds,—and the food which might have been raised upon these grounds, would have supported, in many instances, two or three hundred families. For these reasons, it seems necessary that there should be very high taxes upon horses and dogs kept for pleasure in all populous countries.

An extravagant mode of living among the rich, occasions a great waste of food and other necessities ; and encourages idleness, not only in their own class, but also among the poor, several of whom, by begging, obtain a part of the offals. Whereas, a saving, orderly mode of living among the rich encourages industry and sobriety, not only in their own, but in all the inferior classes ;



and, by preventing waste, the consumption of food is less, which must serve all the industrious of the lower ranks, and can only be injurious to idle beggars. Servants should always bear in mind, that, by wasting food and other necessities, they not only injure their master, but they injure, in a still higher degree, the whole class of labourers and poor householders, by raising the price of these articles.

It does not appear possible, that saving, though carried to an extreme, can in any way lessen the demand for labour, or injure the lower classes. For if misers do not bestow the whole of what remains of their income (after buying necessities) upon manufactures, or other kinds of labour, they must either lend the surplus, or hoard it up. If they lend it, that will add to the stock of the society, give employment to labourers, and tend to raise their wages. If it is hoarded up, the quantity of the precious metals will be diminished, and an additional demand for miners will by that means be formed to supply that deficiency. So that it does not appear, that saving can in any way injure the society, or lessen the demand for labourers; and it is obvious, that attention to prevent waste of food, must serve the labourers.

## S E C T. VII.

*Of the Effects of People living above their Income,  
and engaging in Schemes which involve the  
Fortunes of others.*

As every person in trade puts a higher price upon his goods, in proportion to the risk from bad debts, that additional price is a tax upon the consumers; and as that tax must be higher, in proportion to the number of hands through which the articles go in their passage from the producer to the consumer, it must follow, that the consumers pay a tax upon every article of food and manufactures, upon very few below five, and upon many above twenty per cent.: to make up to dealers the losses they sustain by bankrupts.

But bankrupts not only injure society, by occasioning these very heavy taxes, their expensive mode of living is also ruinous to many of their neighbours, particularly to young beginners in trade, by leading them to suppose it necessary, that people in particular businesses should live in a certain line, whether their income can afford it or not; whereas it must be admitted, that a person is not acting honestly, who buys goods or borrows money, which he is not morally certain

of being able to pay ; and there is no difference in the turpitude of the acts of deceiving a neighbour, by a person giving him his own bill, when conscious of being in a bankrupt state, than there is in deceiving him with a forged bill. Nor is it honest to risk another person's goods or money in any uncertain speculation. For, as the schemer is to have the whole profit, he ought to be in ability to pay all the losses, unless he previously state the extent of the risk. Yet the forger is punished with death, while the bankrupt is not liable to any punishment. Upon this gross partiality of the law, Jonathan Wild observed, that borrowing is a much safer way of taking our neighbour's goods, than stealing\*.

Our detestation of vice seems not to be, in general, regulated by the degree of turpitude of the act, but by the consequences which attend it ; for, as stealing and robbery subject the actor to an ignominious punishment, those who commit such actions are detested and shunned, but when actions of much greater turpitude can be imputed to misfortunes in trade, though well known to have been solely occasioned by the bankrupt having lived above his income, he is received in society as if he had done no evil.

\* Fielding's Life of Jonathan Wild.



The consequence of this conduct to bankrupts is, that few men scruple to indulge their passions for show and expence, while they can by any means obtain credit, without regarding the misery in which they must involve those who trust them.

Hence it appears, that improper lenity to bankrupts, by increasing their number, must not only increase the tax for bad debts, but, by encouraging an expensive mode of living, must check the accumulation of capital, which must check the increase of food and manufactures; thus sacrificing the riches and power of the society, with the peace and comfort of the simple, the honest, and the industrious, to gratify the passions of the extravagant, the deceitful, and the villanous.

NOTE. A friend, who, upon reading the manuscript, approved of these sentiments, requested and obtained liberty to publish them, which he did in the Farmers' Magazine for June 1809, in his own language, and much more fully illustrated.

## S E C T. VIII.

*Of the Effects of the Industry of the Rich.*

As it appears that every person's income, if not wasted or given to useless animals, must be given for some sort of labour, it seems to follow, that the produce of the labour and industry of the rich cannot diminish the general demand for manufactures or labourers, as the part of the revenue of the rich, which would have been given for the work which they execute themselves, still remains, and must be laid out for manufactures or some sort of labour. Consequently, the produce of the industry of the rich increases their riches, without, in the smallest degree, lessening the demand for manufactures or labourers. A general habit of industry, therefore, in all the ranks of society, must enrich it in proportion as it increases the articles which are desired by man. The society may be more numerous, and have greater plenty of food, in proportion as the produce of land is increased; and in proportion as manufactures are increased, by the arts, by employment of stock, and by industry, the society will be richer in these articles.

## S E C T. IX.

*Of the great Increase of the Number and Riches of a People, which are necessarily produced by establishing Manufactures, and encouraging Agriculture.*

IN a country, where such laws and customs have long prevailed as were general in Europe four or five centuries ago, and still prevail in Poland, Austria, Russia, and many other countries, the land, however rich or capable of improvement naturally, is either lying waste as forests, or in an extreme degree of poverty from improper tillage. As the proprietors are anxious to support and increase their power, they let a part of their land for military services, and for supplying their families with necessaries, allowing the remainder to lie waste as forests for hunting, and they spend their income in rustic hospitality. In such a state of society, proprietors of a few acres, and possessors of land upon military tenure, having plenty of food, and no opportunity of bestowing the surplus on dress or furniture, &c. are induced to marry, not only to gratify the sexual passion, and for society, but also by the hope of having sons to increase their power and consequence. In such societies, therefore, the people who have land and



plenty of food, rear great numbers of children ; and as the proprietors can only provide for their younger children, by giving them farms as military tenants of their eldest brother, they must remove the former possessors, who for subsistence must endeavour to obtain a piece of land, as cottars, from a neighbouring tenant ; and the cottars, who are turned out of their possessions, must become labourers for hire, or beg, steal, or die of hunger. Notwithstanding the extreme poverty of cottars and labourers in populous societies of this kind, living in a miserable hut alone, is so very dismal and inconvenient, that the sexual passion, aided by a strong desire for society and conveniency, tempts these miserable people to marry, though without the smallest prospect of being able to support a family. Accordingly, their children, in general, die young from hunger and want of attention ; but the continual overflowing of the higher classes, by keeping up their number, necessarily occasions a continuance of poverty. It is evident that, in such societies, almost the whole of the miserable cottars and labourers are descendants, and many of them near relations, of the highest class. In such societies, the prospect of every thinking person, except the possessors of, and heirs to estates, is dismal in the extreme, as they must see that they and their progeny must gradually

sink into the most wretched state of poverty and dependence.

But if the people of such a country annul the laws of primogeniture, tithes, and others, which obstruct, and enact such new ones as are most effectual for encouraging agriculture and manufactures, so that the land should be cultivated by the owners, or upon feu rights, and none to be allowed to be kept as forests ; and if manufactures were established in free towns in every district, and very high taxes imposed upon horses and dogs, and also upon servants to lessen the waste of food ; in that case, the cultivators and manufacturers would gradually accumulate capital ; and, by improvements, would gradually increase the quantity of the annual productions of the land and of manufactures, which in time would occasion a general opulence. The cities and towns would increase in size and number ; and as the people of every rank, in such a society, exert themselves to excel, or to be equal with one another in dress, furniture, houses, &c. the great and obvious additional expence of a family, forms a very powerful check to matrimony ; and the desire for that connection is also considerably weakened in such countries, by the ease with which rational entertaining company, which occupy the mind, may be obtained ; and also, by the comfortable accommo-

dation to be obtained in lodgings in all towns, and even in large villages. As the additional expence of a family is greater in proportion as the rank is higher, which must lessen the number of marriages in proportion, and as the luxurious manner of living of the higher ranks lessens the number of children, it may be expected that the families, in the highest ranks, will decrease in number, that the greatest increase will be among the lower, and that individuals of those classes, of talents and industry, will be constantly rising into the higher classes to make up their deficiency of number. These views must form powerful incitements to men of talents, in every line, to exert themselves. If such a country be so well cultivated, and the produce of food so great, that cities and towns are very much increased in size and number, there may be no increase of people, though they are fully supplied with food; as the decrease in the large cities, and in the higher ranks, may balance the increase in other situations. It would appear, therefore, that such a society may continue in that prosperous state any length of time, without becoming over-populous.

As the produce of the land, in the latter state of such a society, may be more than ten times greater than in the former, the people may have plenty of food, though seven or eight times more



numerous; and, by the general industry of all ranks, assisted by machines and a proper division of labour, the annual produce of manufactures would be more than a hundred times greater. So that the society might live in affluence in the latter state, without trade with any foreign nation, though paying fifty times the sum for public purposes that they could pay in the former.

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## CHAP. V.

### OF COMMERCE.

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#### SECT. I.

#### *Of the Effects of Commerce with Foreign Nations.*

IN former ages, when the proprietors in Europe acted as sovereigns upon their estates, when their security and consequence depended upon the number of men they could command, it was their interest to give their spare produce to people who could serve them in a military capacity; and as

that service could only be executed by men living upon the estate, who could be ready at a call upon every occasion, almost the whole spare produce of the proprietors was then given to the people who lived upon their estates.

But since proprietors have been compelled to give up contending with one another for superiority in power, they have contended for superiority in fine manufactures, and in the productions of the fine arts. The natural consequence of this competition has been, that when the labourers who resided upon estates could not supply the proprietors with such articles as they desired, their spare produce has been sent to labourers of other districts or countries who could supply them. But when a part of the produce was, for these purposes, exported from different parts to pay for manufactures, the labourers in the place from whence it was exported had no method of procuring employment, to purchase subsistence, but by endeavouring to obtain a share of such work as must be executed in the place, such as agricultural labour, buildings, menial service, &c. In proportion, therefore, as a larger share of the produce was exported to pay for manufactures and works of art, the labourers were reduced to greater poverty. The exportation of food raised its price, and the importation of manufactures les-

sened the demand for labourers and reduced their wages. It seems also evident, that the exportation of manufactures, by increasing the demand for labourers, raises their wages, and the importation of food as payment lowers its price.

It seems, therefore, to follow, that where there is a free trade between populous countries, or between populous provinces of the same country; the labourers, in the countries and in the provinces where the arts and manufactures have arrived at great perfection, are, or may be, enriched at the expence of the labourers of other countries and provinces, who have not these advantages.

The labourers of England, for instance, furnish the proprietors of land and other people in Poland, Ireland, the Highlands of Scotland, and many other countries, with great variety of manufactures; several kinds of which the labourers in these countries cannot manufacture at all, nor can they afford other kinds at two, three, or even at four times the price at which they can be purchased in England, though the labourers in these countries are willing to work for one-third of the wages which labourers obtain in England; hence, the labourers in England, by obtaining high wages, can afford to supply themselves with a sufficiency



of the corn of Poland, and of cattle from Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, though the price of the corn is raised by expences and loss by carriage, and the cattle are raised in price by expences, and reduced in value by travelling, while the poor labourers in the countries from which they are sent, are idle for want of employment, and starving for want of food in the midst of plenty; not having wherewith to purchase a sufficiency.

But the idleness and poverty of these miserable people are not occasioned by the cheapness of provisions, nor are the industry and riches of the labourers in England occasioned by the dearness of provisions, as has been erroneously supposed. The condition of labourers, in all these countries, must be better in proportion as food is plenty and cheap. The affluence of the people who have no land, in England, is a consequence of their knowledge in arts and manufactures; and their accumulation of capital and machinery, which they have gradually acquired by living in free towns where their persons and property are secure, and the poverty of the people, who have no land in Poland and Ireland, &c. is a consequence of their want of these advantages. Thus, it is plain, that great quantities of food may be annually exported,

while the labourers in the country are starving for want.

Though an importation of manufactures into a populous country, for which food is exported in payment, must lessen the demand for labour, raise the price of food, and by these means impoverish the labourers, yet it is proper to remark, that if manufactures, and not food, are exported in payment, such exchange of manufactures can neither diminish nor augment the demand for labour in either country; it only turns it into new channels.

When merchants in Britain, for instance, engage ships, and load them with hard ware and such other manufactures as they think will sell best in India, where they dispose of their cargo, and where they buy silks, cottons, and such other manufactures as they think will sell best at home, it is evident that the British goods sold in India must diminish the demand for manufacturing such goods there; but the demand for silk and cotton goods, &c. by the British merchants, must, in an equal degree, increase the demand for labourers in these lines. So that the same number of labourers would be employed in India, whether such trade is or is not in existence. The trade only turns them into different lines of business, and it has the same effect upon the demand for labourers

in Britain. Instead of silk and cotton weavers, &c. to manufacture such goods as are brought from India, there are ship-builders and tradesmen in the different lines, whom the merchants employ in fitting out ships, and in making up their cargo for the Indian market, and in the lines in which they chuse to spend their profits.

It appears, therefore, that, though the exchange of manufactures between Britain and India may accommodate the people of both countries with manufactures more to their taste, it can have no effect upon the demand for labour, nor can it have much effect, if any, in enriching either nation. Even the advantage of procuring a better kind of goods from India might, perhaps, in time, be as well obtained by encouraging our own workmen to manufacture such goods, by bounties upon their production, and by premiums to those who excel.

Dr Smith says, that a considerable extent of market is necessary to bring manufactures to perfection; but the intercourse of the people of such a nation as England seems to be much more than sufficient for that purpose; and it is obvious, that as an exchange of manufactures with foreigners, increases the number of people employed in some branches, it diminishes their number in an equal



degree in others. Such an exchange, therefore, can produce no general improvement in the art of manufacturing.

Hence, an exchange of manufactures between nations, like the exchange among manufacturers in the same neighbourhood, neither augments nor diminishes the general demand for labour, but is a division of labour upon an enlarged scale.

As the labourers in one country, however, may have advantages over those in others, in particular branches, an exchange between two populous countries, may, in some cases, be equally beneficial to both; but, that it may be equally beneficial, it is essentially necessary that such exchange shall be in manufactures. For, if either nation pay for the imported manufactures with the vegetable productions of the land, the labourers of that nation must suffer by that trade, as it must lessen the demand for labour, and raise the price of these productions.

It seems material to remark, that, in consequence of a division of labour, different bodies of workmen are wholly employed on different kinds of goods; and, as the number employed upon the different kinds must increase or decrease, according as taste or fashion occasions a greater

or less demand, when the demand for any kind stops suddenly, many of these workmen must want employment. But if the goods, to which general taste had turned, are manufactured in the same neighbourhood, the workmen, who were turned off from the manufactures which had become unfashionable, would, in a little time, be all employed in those which had become fashionable (if not prevented by corporation laws); so that the change of fashion would only produce a temporary distress. But when manufactures, essentially different in their nature, are only carried on in particular towns, at a great distance from one another, as those of Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Glasgow, &c. in that case, when the manufactures of any of these towns go out of fashion, or when many labourers are laid idle by the introduction of new machinery, the workmen are all impoverished, and many ruined, as they cannot go to the towns, the goods of which have come into fashion, in which there must be a great demand for labourers. So that a change of fashion from metal buttons, buckles, &c. to articles of wool or cotton, or the introduction of machinery, may ruin the workers in some towns, while, by the sudden advance of wages, many of the workers in others fall into habits of drunkenness and dissipation. It seems, therefore, plain, that the change of fashions, or the introduction of

machinery, would produce much less evil, if the different kinds of manufactures were carried on in the same neighbourhood; and, if labourers were allowed to apply themselves to any occupation which they might think best.

But if the evils which are produced by a change of fashion in the same country are so considerable, how great must be the danger of a body of manufacturers who are employed by a foreign manufacturing nation, as the demand for their goods may not only be stopped by a change of fashion in that nation, but also by a jealous whim of the government or people of either country! Besides these causes of danger, as such trade must chiefly consist in exchanges of the manufactures in which each nation has some advantage, the people employed in these lines may obtain considerable profits, and may justly praise the trade as advantageous to them; but the people employed in the kind of manufactures that are imported in payment, must suffer in an equal degree that the exporters are benefited, as the demand for their goods must be less, in proportion to the importation of goods in payment for those exported. So that there may be a great demand for manufactures in some districts, which may appear to be highly beneficial to the nation, while it may be ruining or impoverishing great numbers of people in others.



On these different accounts, a free trade of exchange of manufactures, between populous neighbouring manufacturing nations, must always be attended with great danger.

As this is the case, and as the advantages derived from exporting manufactures to populous countries, where the labourers are ignorant of these arts, increase the misery of these people, by raising the price of food, and lowering the wages of labour; it seems, therefore, necessary to obtain a supply for the increasing numbers of people, of the necessary productions of land, without injuring the labourers of neighbouring nations, that every populous manufacturing nation should give particular encouragement to the trade with under-peopled countries, where, from the plenty of land, it is much more the interest of the inhabitants to cultivate the land, and, with its produce, to purchase manufactures, than to attempt to make them; and, it is obvious, that such a trade must be equally advantageous to both parties.

Besides the trade in exchange of the manufactures of one nation for the manufactures or food of others, there are considerable exchanges carried on in Europe, in the productions of the land in northern countries, with those which are produced in the warmer climates of the south; which

have considerable effects in diminishing or increasing the means of subsistence in different nations.

It is obvious, that, if a northern nation send a quantity of corn to a wine country, and receive, in return, only as much wine and fruit as can support a tenth of the people which the corn could have supported, such exchange must diminish the funds of subsistence, and impoverish the labourers in the northern nation; or, if as much corn is given for a pipe of wine as would have produced five pipes of ale, as strong and nourishing as the wine, the quantity of subsistence in the northern nation must be diminished in proportion to the extent of such exchange. Besides, as wine is taxed in the countries in which it is produced, the drinkers of wine, in northern nations, pay that tax to the government in the wine country; whereas, there being no tax upon corn where it is produced, the government of the country from which it is exported, receive no tax from its consumers in the wine country; on the contrary, there is a very high bounty paid in some countries, on its exportation, which enables the consumers, in the wine countries, to buy it so much cheaper. By purchasing wine with corn, therefore, the people of northern nations, not only diminish the quantity of their subsistence, but they pay above five times

the sum for it, which they would for ale, and also subject themselves to be taxed by the governments in the wine countries, besides the tax paid to their own upon the exportation of the corn, and importation of the wine; yet most of the northern nations carry on that imprudent trade with France, which enriches the people and government of that country, and impoverishes those of their own; but if wine is received in exchange for manufactures, such a trade seems to be advantageous to the manufacturing nation, as it increases the quantity of its food. Hence imposing a much higher tax upon the importation of the wines of France into Britain, than upon those of Portugal, seems to have been adopted upon prudent principles, notwithstanding the ridicule with which Mr David Hume and Dr Smith treat it, if Portugal take manufactures in payment, and France take food. The Doctor seems to have been led into this, and many other mistakes, by supposing, that the effect of the exportation of the produce of agricultural labour is the same as that of manufacturing labour. But it has been shewn, in this section, that the exportation of the necessary vegetable productions of land, from a populous, circumscribed country, must impoverish the people, by raising the price of these necessaries, and lowering wages; and that an importation of them, in exchange for manufactures, has an opposite effect. As the productions of mines



do not lessen the quantity of the vegetable productions of a country, an exportation of minerals, of which there are inexhaustible quantities, must produce the same effect as the exportation of manufactures.

It must, therefore, follow, that the laws which form restrictions upon a free importation of food into Britain, must have a direct tendency to raise its price and lower wages. The latter effect is at present counteracted by the demand for men for the army and navy, by a great emigration to the Indies and America, and by the great influx of riches from the Indies. If these causes had not kept up wages, they must have been reduced by the high price of food, obliging many to work for hire who lived independently when food was cheap. And if wages had fallen, when food rose in price, as great numbers of the poor could not, in that case, purchase a sufficiency to support life, they must have subsisted by begging, or die; and their death would have lessened the competition for employment, and prevented wages from sinking lower.

## S E C T. II.

*Of the effects of the Merchants of a Country managing the trade between Foreign Nations.*

THOUGH it appears that a populous nation cannot derive much benefit from an exchange of manufactures with other countries, yet, if the merchants of any particular country manage the exchange of goods between different foreign nations, in that case, as the profits of merchants are considerable, and as the whole profits derived from that trade must centre in the nation in which the merchants who carry it on reside, that nation must, in proportion to its size, and to the extent of the trade, abound in rich merchants, and also in the productions of all the countries whose trade they manage.

A merchant at Alexandria, for instance, who had imported a quantity of India goods, by selling a part of them to the different nations of Europe, would receive in payment so great a quantity of the productions of these countries, that a part of them would pay for a fresh cargo from India, and the surplus, not only of those cargoes, but what remained of the cargo from India, would be sold to the people in Alexandria, and would constitute

a regular revenue to the merchant while the trade continued ; and an influx of goods, in this way, as the profits of merchants, would have the same effect in enriching Alexandria, as if they were produced in that city and its neighbourhood. In the same manner, the Dutch, by managing the foreign trade of Portugal, Spain, Poland, and other nations of Europe, have been as well supplied for centuries with the productions of those countries, as if they had been produced in their own.

It seems to have been in this way, that Palmyra, Tyre, Alexandria, Venice, Portugal, and Holland, have been successively enriched by the trade to India ; and it is in the same way, that Britain derives a profit from the *trade to that country* at present, and not from the exchange of British with India manufactures. But the importation into Britain of manufactures or produce of land, as territorial revenue, or as fortunes made by individuals in that country, who come to settle in Britain, must have the same effect to enrich Britain, as if these articles were produced in it. And as that effect must be in proportion to the quantity of goods received in Britain on these accounts, the greater the quantity that can be purchased in India, with the sums due in that country, to be remitted, Britain must be more enriched ; and it must be equally advantageous to individuals in In-



dia, who wish to remit their fortunes to Britain, that goods are bought cheap in India.

As the conclusions at the end of the preceding section are directly opposite to the principles of the British corn laws, it is proper to examine, with attention, their nature and tendency.

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## CHAP. VI.

### OF THE CORN LAWS.

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#### SECT. I.

#### *Of the Motives of the Promoters of these Laws.*

THE opinion of the legislature of England, respecting these laws, changed gradually, from the reign of Henry the 7th to the Revolution; from which period, they have been formed upon principles, directly opposite to those on which they had been formed before his time; and it deserves particular remark, that those changes coincide

with the changes in the supposed interests of the members of parliament, who are in general the greatest owners of land, and with the increase of their power in the legislature.

Previous to the act of the 19th year of that king, enforcing former laws against retainers, by severe fines and punishments, which were by him rigorously executed, the increase of the number of their dependents was the principal object of the ambition of the great owners of land; for which purpose they had formerly concurred with the kings (whose interest, it is also, supposed to be, to increase the number of their subjects), in enacting laws for encouraging importation of food, and preventing its exportation. But, after they were prevented from gratifying their pride, by supporting a number of retainers, they gradually adopted the practice of gratifying it, by vying with each other in fine houses, furniture, clothes, and other productions of the arts.

Towards the end of Henry the 7th's reign, he obtained a law, to oblige the owners of land to keep up the farm-houses; which shows, that the owners of land were no longer anxious to have many men upon their estates, but were anxious to increase their rents to enable them to purchase the works of art; and that law also shows, that

the king was still anxious to increase the number of his subjects.

Thus the apparent interest of the owners of land was become in some degree opposite, in that particular, to the interest of the Crown; and this opposition gradually increased, as more of the land was let in large farms for high rents, instead of being let in small farms to retainers. And as the rents were then generally paid in produce, the owners were naturally anxious for an alteration in the corn laws, that they might have liberty to send it abroad to the best market; and that importation should be prohibited, to prevent foreigners from competing with them in the home-market. But the power of the Crown was so great, during the reigns of the Tudors, that very little alteration was obtained in these laws during that period.

In the reign of Philip and Mary, liberty was obtained to export corn when wheat was at or below six shillings and eightpence a quarter, and other grains proportionably low; and that liberty was gradually extended by Elizabeth, until wheat was at twenty shillings a quarter. But new laws were also enacted to keep up farm-houses, to check the general practice, at that time, of laying arable land into grass.



The power of parliament began to increase in the reign of James, who, to increase his revenue, consented to a law for allowing corn to be exported at higher prices than formerly, upon paying him a duty of four shillings a quarter upon wheat, and duties upon other grain in proportion. But importation was still allowed, free of duty. Little alteration was made in the corn laws, during the reign of Charles I. and none at all, during the civil war, or Oliver Cromwell's usurpation.

In the first year after the restoration, liberty was obtained to export corn, while wheat was at or below forty-eight shillings a quarter, upon paying a duty of twenty shillings a quarter to the king, and other sorts of grain were allowed to be exported at proportional prices and duties.

It is necessary here to remark, that the coin was, at this time, in a very debased state; that forty-eight shillings of that coin was not worth thirty-six shillings of the present standard-coin or gold currency.

The long parliament had, in 1647, prohibited the exportation of wool; and, to please the boroughs, it was still more strictly prohibited the first year after the restoration. But

as a compensation for this loss, the owners of land obtained a law, in 1670, by which wheat imported was to pay a duty of 16s. 8d. a quarter, when the price was at or below L.2 : 13 : 4 a quarter; to pay a duty of 8s. when above that price and not exceeding L.4 a quarter, and to pay a duty of 5s. 4d. a quarter when above L.4, however high it might be.

As these duties on importation were payable to the Crown, it is not very surprising, that an extravagant, unprincipled king should agree to impose such exorbitant duties upon corn that might be necessary to supply the wants of the poor; but it is very surprising that the boroughs, the inhabitants of which are buyers of food, should have consented to such a law; and it is even surprising, that the promoters of the law should have allowed their avarice to blind them so very much, as to suppose, that the buyers of food would submit to a tax of 5s. 4d. a quarter on wheat, when the price was above L.4; or to 8s. when above L.2 : 13 : 4; and, accordingly, that law has been the cause of much private distress, and of many public commotions.

By the Revolution the powers of parliament were fully established, and no measure of consequence could afterwards be attempted by the

king, without its concurrence. It was, therefore, necessary for King William to yield to the wishes of the members in their schemes, if he expected that they should concur in his. Accordingly, to obtain their consent to a tax on land, he, a few months after the Revolution, agreed to a law, to which the following preamble was prefixed: "For as much as it hath been found by experience, that the exportation of corn and grain into foreign parts, when the price thereof is *at a low rate* in this kingdom, hath been advantageous, not only to the owners of land, but the trade of this country in general; Be it therefore enacted," &c.

The legislature, by this act, allowed a bounty to the exporters of wheat of 5s. a quarter; but, as there was still a duty of 20s. a quarter payable on exportation, the bounty was only a deduction of 5s. a quarter from that duty.

But, in the year 1700, the whole duties on the exportation of corn were taken off, by an act, entitled, "For the greater Encouragement of Tillage." Yet the bounty and the law of 1670, imposing exorbitant duties upon importation, were continued. This law, therefore, completed the new code.



By the old laws, importation was allowed free of duty; which was proper: but exportation was always prohibited; which was improper. It could not be for the interest of any person to injure the cultivators, by importing corn when it was cheap; it would, therefore, always be carried to the highest market. But it was unjust and very discouraging to cultivators to be prevented, in plentiful years, from sending corn abroad, for which there might be no demand at home. By this new code, exportation is, very properly, allowed, but very unjustly encouraged by a bounty, as that must raise the price to the buyers at home, and lower the price to the buyers abroad; and it was also cruel and unjust to continue the law of 1670, which prevented the buyers of food, by exorbitant duties, from being supplied from foreign countries, when crops at home were deficient. Hence it appears, that the operative clauses, in both the old and the new code of corn laws, are unjust and oppressive;—that it would have been better for the nation if no such laws had existed, as, in that case, the cultivator would have sent his produce to the best market at home or abroad, and the buyers of food would have been supplied from abroad when the price was higher at home.

Though the bounty was intended, and must have operated, as a tax upon the consumers of

corn by raising its price, yet, as it continued moderate (owing to causes, which will be afterwards pointed out), there were no material public commotions on account of these laws until the year 1756; and as these commotions increased the year following, government found it necessary to stop the exportation, and to allow importation without duty for a limited time, contrary to the existing laws; and as the price of corn continued high, different temporary acts for suspending the corn laws were passed, to mitigate the distress and quiet the people, until the year 1773, when it was judged necessary to annul the old, and to establish a new rate of duties when the prices were high. By this new law, the duty on importing wheat was reduced to sixpence a quarter when the price was at or above 48s., and no bounty allowed upon exporting wheat when the price was at or above 44s. a quarter.

Mr Dirom, after giving a chronological account of the corn laws enacted before and after the Revolution, when he comes to this of 1773, exclaims\*,—" But we now come to a law of this year, by which the venerable old code, so beneficial to manufactures and industry, and so

\* Inquiry into the Corn Laws, by Alexander Dirom, Esq. page 99.

“salutary to the kingdom in general; that code  
 “which had raised the agriculture of Great Bri-  
 “tain from the lowest state of depression to the  
 “highest degree of prosperity; which had pro-  
 “duced plenty at reasonable prices for so great a  
 “number of years at home, and had brought  
 “such immense sums of money for the excres-  
 “cent stock of corn from abroad, was now torn  
 “up by the roots, and scattered by the winds.”

From this exclamation it might be supposed, that the legislature had adopted the old system of allowing a free importation of corn, and prohibiting exportation. Yet the tables in his own work show, that the law of 1773, by continuing the bounty until wheat was at 44s., and the high duties on importation until it was 48s., was formed for the same purpose as the laws then in part annulled. But as it had been found so very often necessary, for repressing civil commotions, to stop the payment of the bounties, and to allow importation without duty, government thought it more prudent to lower the duties, when prices were high, by a new law, than to continue to suspend the laws from time to time. We cannot, therefore, give government much praise for lowering the rates; on the contrary, as the execution of the former laws had, by raising the price of corn, driven the people so often to desperate



acts, it is surprising, that the legislature was so backward to lower the rates at which bounties on exportation were payable and importation allowed, and that at last, in 1773, they were left so very high.

But it is obvious, that it was the intention of the promoters of that law to raise the price of corn as high as could be done with prudence; they, therefore, lowered the rates at which bounties were to be paid and importation allowed; which seemed to favour the people, without altering the rates when prices were below 48s. for wheat, &c. or giving up any part of the effects of the former laws in raising the price of corn; as it had been found, that, when prices rose above the rates now adopted, government had been obliged to suspend the execution of the laws. The law of 1773, therefore, was not different in principle, but was more artfully formed than the preceding laws.

According to Mr Dirom, the corn laws of 1670 and of 1700, encouraged agriculture, by raising the price of corn, and they served the poor, by supplying them with food at reasonable rates; but he does not attempt to point out the manner in which these laws could produce such opposite effects. His assertion, that they had raised the

agriculture of Britain from the lowest state of depression to the highest state of prosperity, shows, either complete ignorance of the state of agriculture before and after these laws were enacted, or a total disregard to truth; as the fact is, that, notwithstanding the discouragements which agriculture laboured under from the old corn laws, the laws of purveyance, bad roads, and the insecurity of property, (which he has fully pointed out in the beginning of his treatise) great improvements had been made in many counties of England, not only by enclosing, which was very general, but also in cultivation, which was much more generally understood and practised in Essex in the 1700, when these laws were enacted, than in Mr Dirom's native county or country at the time he wrote, though these laws, which he says, encouraged agriculture so very much, had then been in operation above seventy years.

Mr Arthur Young, in the chapter on the corn laws, in his political arithmetic, admits, that the design of the bounty was to raise the price of corn, yet afterwards, with the same inconsistency as Mr Dirom, he imputes the cheapness of corn, before 1750, to the bounty, without showing how it could produce these opposite effects.

As he travelled through many counties of England, for the purpose of writing an account of the

state of agriculture, his sentiments on that subject might be supposed to be correct. Yet, though he is a keen advocate for the corn laws, he flatly contradicts Mr Dirom's assertion respecting their effects, by saying, in the fore-cited chapter, "that husbandry made no advances during the first half of the century, except in Norfolk."

As the price of corn continued high, notwithstanding the liberty to import it when at lower prices than formerly, the people were so much irritated, by seeing a bounty paid upon what was sent to foreigners, while they were paying high prices at home, that disturbances were very frequent in different counties; and as many of the owners of land and farmers complained of allowing corn to be imported when at prices which, *they said, were low*, to determine what measures should be adopted, to satisfy the owners of land, without driving the people to desperation, a committee of the lords of the privy council was appointed to give their opinion upon the subject; and, accordingly, a representation of the nature of these laws was drawn up by that committee, and said to be presented to the king on the 8th of March 1790; a copy of which (taken from an edition of Mr Charles Smith's Tracts on the Corn Trade and Corn Laws, which was printed 1804,) is inserted Appendix I. After some ge-



neral observations upon the corn laws, these lords, in the thirteenth paragraph, say : “ It appears, therefore, that the principles on which our corn laws are founded, are in general wise; the two objects they have in view, are, first, to *secure a reasonable price at all times to the farmer*; and, in the next place, to prevent that price being at any time so high, as to distress the poor and the manufacturer.” They do not here think proper to mention, how high the price may be carried without, in *their opinion*, distressing the poor; but, after laying down with anxious care a number of regulations for preventing corn from being imported, unless the prices are very high, they, in the last paragraph, show, distinctly, at what point the distresses of the poor ought to be attended to, in the following words : “ In forming these regulations, the lords of the committee have endeavoured equally to provide for the prosperity of the grower of corn and the necessities of the consumer. The interests of the grower and consumer are supposed by some to be at variance. To reconcile them as much as possible, is the end which every wise government should endeavour to attain. The interest of the consumer is entitled to the first consideration, so far as to preserve him, in every possible contingency, *from scarcity and distress*. And as distress for want of this

“ necessary article of subsistence cannot long ex-  
 “ ist in any country, without exposing it to those  
 “ commotions which frequently happen in times  
 “ of dearth, it is not likely that the grower of  
 “ corn *would enjoy in safety* the fruits of his in-  
 “ dustry, unless due attention is paid to this first  
 “ and capital object; *but this point being once se-*  
 “ *cured*, the interest of the grower should, in the  
 “ next place, *occupy the particular attention of the*  
 “ *legislature.*” We have here a distinct explana-  
 tion of what these lords meant by their humane  
 expression; in the thirteenth paragraph, “ of atten-  
 “ tion to prevent the distress of the poor and ma-  
 “ nufacturer.” It is to prevent that distress from  
 driving them to acts of violence; but, if that can  
 be prevented, these lords explicitly declare, that  
 it is the duty of government to raise the price of  
 corn as high as possible. And they avow that  
 their advice to government, to avoid civil com-  
 motions, does not proceed from commiseration  
 for the people, who must be suffering great dis-  
 stress when driven to these excesses, but because  
 it is not likely, “ that the grower of corn would  
 “ enjoy in safety the fruits of his industry.”

By the preambles to all the laws respecting food,  
 since the revolution, except the first, the inten-  
 tion of enacting them is declared to have been  
 solely for the interest of the *farmers and cultivators*,

*and to increase the quantity of food.* The promoters of these laws, being themselves owners of land, thought it imprudent to avow that they were influenced by the interest of the landlords, as they would, in that case, be considered as being actuated by selfish motives. To avoid that imputation, their own interest as owners of land is never mentioned, except in the first act after the revolution. But it has been shewn, in the preceding inquiry, that a high price of the produce of land cannot serve the farmers, except during the currency of their leases; that it must redound entirely to the profit of the owners of land, as the profits of farmers cannot, in new leases, rise above the profits of stock in other professions, nor can we suppose that the members of this committee were ignorant of this circumstance, though they have pretended that they were only influenced by regard to the cultivators, and a desire to make corn plenty in the country.

That they saw distinctly that the higher the price of corn was, the higher their rents must necessarily be, appears evident from the fourteenth paragraph of their representation, near the middle of which, they say, “ In all years, and particularly  
“ in those of reasonable plenty, the price of corn  
“ is lower in the countries bordering on the Bal-  
“ tic and in America, than it is in Great Britain.



“ In the north of Europe corn can be more cheap-  
 “ ly raised, because *the value of land* is less, and  
 “ the price of labour is lower. In America, *the*  
 “ *value of land* is greatly less, and from the extent  
 “ of their farms they are able to resort to new  
 “ land, or to substitute fallows in the place of ma-  
 “ nure, and can therefore raise corn without this  
 “ additional expence; and these circumstances  
 “ more than compensate the higher price of la-  
 “ bour in that country.” It is plain, from this  
 quotation, that though they endeavour to hide their  
 strong desire to raise and keep up rents, by saying,  
 that corn can be raised cheaper in the north of  
 Europe and in America, because the *value of land*  
 is less,—they knew that they ought to have said,  
 because *the rent of land* is less: *They knew that*  
*land* is cultivated and pays a rent according to  
 the value of its produce, after all expenses are de-  
 ducted, and not according to *its value*, or the sum  
 it can be sold for; and that the price of corn would  
 be reduced, if a free importation from these coun-  
 tries was allowed; and they thought that their  
 rents would be reduced in proportion.

In the thirteenth paragraph, they point out, very  
 properly, the imprudence of prohibiting exporta-  
 tion, and they begin the fourteenth paragraph as  
 follows: “ It is right, therefore, to allow the ex-  
 “ portation of corn whenever it is sold under a

“ certain price.” This conclusion is fully admitted, but it is evident that these lords infer, that as it was so necessary to allow exportation, it was also proper to encourage it by a bounty; an inference which by no means follows, as, by a liberty to export without a bounty, the surplus could be sent to the highest market abroad. But as they had no arguments to adduce in support of the bounty, they rest the propriety of it upon that inference, strengthened by the following fallacious statement: “ It is not necessary for the committee to offer  
 “ any thing in justification of that policy which  
 “ commenced at the revolution, of encouraging by  
 “ bounty this exportation, and which the legisla-  
 “ ture has thought fit to continue to the present  
 “ time. Whatever doubts may be entertained by  
 “ some, of the wisdom of this measure, it cannot,  
 “ surely be thought prudent to alter it at present,  
 “ for it is a certain fact, that the agriculture of  
 “ this country has progressively increased and  
 “ flourished, from the time when this bounty was  
 “ first granted, though it is true that other causes  
 “ have been assigned for this improvement.”

As these lords admit, that they knew that doubts were entertained of the propriety of the bounty, and that it was denied that the prosperity of agriculture had been a consequence of that measure, it was their duty, in justification of an act, apparent-

ly so grossly selfish, and certainly very oppressive to the poor, to obviate all these doubts. And we must conclude, that though accustomed, as courtiers, to hide their real designs, under fallacious pretences, they could think of no apology, but assuming it as a fact, that as agriculture had improved after the establishment of the bounty, that measure had certainly been the cause.

In the year following, a new law was enacted, upon the principles recommended in the representation of that committee, by which exportation was allowed, until wheat was at forty-six shillings a quarter, but no bounty was allowed, when at or above forty-four shillings, and importation of wheat was prohibited, when at or below fifty shillings a quarter, and to pay two shillings and sixpence duty, when above fifty shillings, and below fifty-four shillings.

The owners of land were not satisfied with this law, though the price of corn continued to rise, and in 1795 rose to an unprecedented height, and has continued high ever since, yet they urged the government to review the corn laws, and they were accordingly referred to a committee of the House of Commons, who gave in a report to the house, a copy of which, taken from the Edinburgh Courant, of May 26, 1804, is given Appendix II. with



a copy of the act of parliament, formed upon the recommendation of that committee.

By that report, it appears, that the members were actuated by the same desire to raise the price of food, and the rent of land, as the committee of privy council in 1790. They express themselves in the fourth and fifth paragraph of their report as follows: “ It further appears to your committee, “ that the tables in the said act of the 31st of the “ king, for regulating the price at which the ports “ for the exportation are to be open, with or without bounty, and at which the importation of foreign corn is to be admitted on the low duties, “ generally into the kingdom, require very material alteration. This alteration seems to be demanded by the advance in the price of labour, “ and all other expenses to which the farmer is “ now subject, beyond what he was liable to at “ the time when these regulations were established. “ ed.

“ Your committee, therefore, recommend the “ tables hereto annexed, to be adopted, instead of “ those in the act of the 31st of the king, as more “ fitted to the present times.”

By the act, it will be seen, that the alterations here recommended, are, that the bounties shall be

allowed, until the price of wheat exceeds forty-eight shillings a quarter, and other grains in proportion, and no importation of wheat to be allowed, until the price exceeds sixty-three shillings a quarter, which is thirteen shillings higher than importation was allowed by the law of 1791.

It must be kept in mind, that the profits of farmers, are, in general, regulated by the profits of stock in other lines of business, and consequently, whatever the expences of agriculture are, it is the business of a farmer to deduct them from the sum of his expected sales, and then engage for such a rent as will leave him a reasonable profit. If the expences, therefore, are high, the rent must be lower on that account; and every man who takes a lease of land, takes his chance of the rise or fall in the prices of its produce, and of the necessary expences.

Hence, as the rise of wages had, in this case, been gradual, farmers had not the shadow of a claim for relief on that account, even upon their landlords, for a deduction of rent, far less upon the buyers of food. But the fact is, that no such claim had been made by farmers, no petition for compensation for the rise of wages had been presented to parliament; nor is it pretended that there had been any. In the paragraph quoted, the

committee say, that the alteration which they propose in the law, “*seems to be demanded by the advance in the price of labour, and all other expences to which the farmer is now subject.*”

As the quantity of corn imported had been gradually increasing, and for some years had been very great, there was no reason to expect that the produce of the country in future, could, in ordinary years, supply the inhabitants. Prohibiting importation of wheat, therefore, when the price was at or below three guineas a quarter, as recommended by the committee, and adopted by the legislature, was enacting a law to prevent the price from ever being below that sum, however plentiful and cheap it might be in neighbouring countries, upon the pretence that high prices were necessary to indemnify the *farmers* for the advance of wages and other expences. It deserves particular remark, that this boon was given to *farmers* at a time when they were, and for many years had been making more than double the profits that had ever been made in the business. The owners of land, who were the promoters of the law, were fully acquainted with the prosperous situation of the farmers who possessed old leases. But as the very high price of provisions had induced many to give high rents for land, and the promoters of the bill knew that many more would have offered high



rents, but were deterred by fear of a fall of prices, it was their interest to raise the price at which corn could be imported, and to carry the bounties to a higher price, not only to enable the farmers to pay their rents who had taken land high, but also to encourage others to give high rents. Raising the prices, therefore, at which bounties were to be given upon exportation, and high duties upon importation, was not done with any intention to serve the farmers, but for the sole purpose of raising the rents of land. And it deserves particular notice, that though the rent of arable land is very seldom lower, and is, in many cases, two or three times higher than all the other expences of cultivation, yet the very great advance of rents is not mentioned by the committee as a reason for raising these rates.

From these facts and observations, it is evident, that the sole intention of the promoters of the corn laws has been, since the revolution, to raise the price of corn and the rent of land. But though that is evident, and though they have not adduced the shadow of a proof that these laws have produced any good effects; yet, as it is of the utmost importance that their nature and tendency be fully ascertained, I shall state the good effects ascribed to them in a regular order, and shall examine each with great care.

1st, That it appears from experience, that the price of corn has been much more equal since these laws were enacted, than formerly, and that they have produced that beneficial effect.

2d, That they were the cause of corn being lower in price, during the first half of the last century, than during the last sixty years, <sup>of the preceding century,</sup> while other articles, from the increase of the precious metals, were rising in price; and that the fluctuation, and great rise of price, since 1773, has been a consequence of the change which was then made in these laws.

3d, That the bounty on exportation, and high duties on importation, when corn is below certain prices, which remove the fear of an over-stocked market, either by too much tillage and great crops at home, or by an importation from foreign countries, where rents and expences are lower, are necessary to encourage cultivation.

4th, That the bounties induce cultivators to raise so much corn, that in ordinary crops, there is not only a sufficient supply for our own people, but also a surplus for exportation, by which the nation is greatly enriched when the crops are good, and when they are bad, that surplus is a resource for supplying the people, independent of foreign na-

tions. And that the liberty to import, when crops are very bad, and the price of corn high, prevents it from rising so very much as to distress the poor and the manufacturer.

5th, Besides these good effects which the bounty on exportation and duties upon importation of corn produce, Mr Malthus says, that they are necessary to put the cultivators of land upon an equal footing with the manufacturers, who are allowed bounties upon exporting, while high duties are payable upon importing many of their articles.

I shall examine the different advantages ascribed to these laws in their order.

## S E C T. II.

*Of the Causes of the Price of Corn being so much more fluctuating, and frequently so very much higher in former Ages, than during the first Half of the last Century.*

To discover these causes, it is necessary to attend to the difference which has gradually taken place in the security of property, in the liberty of traders, and in the facility of the intercourse between provinces and nations.



The exportation of corn was prohibited in England, except with the king's license, until the reign of Philip and Mary, and was then only allowed, when wheat was so low as six shillings and eight pence a quarter. And every person at that time who bought corn, for the purpose of selling it again, was, by law, considered an engrosser, and liable to two months imprisonment for the first offence, besides forfeiting the corn; to six months imprisonment for the second offence, besides forfeiting double the value of the corn; and for the third offence, to be set on the pillory, to suffer imprisonment during the king's pleasure, and to forfeit all his goods and chattels. Under such laws, no person of property durst engage in the corn trade. Hence, however high the price of corn might be in some counties, and low in others, the farmers only durst send it from those in which it was cheap, to supply the wants of those in which it was scarce and dear; a set of men who have seldom the means of knowing what the prices are in the neighbouring counties, far less in distant counties and foreign countries.

The profits of a corn merchant arise from his being regularly informed of the prices in the different counties, and in different kingdoms, and from his buying where it is cheap, to sell where it is dear. To prohibit such a trade, was to confine

the people in every part of the kingdom to the produce of their neighbourhood, however deficient that might be, and however plentiful corn might be in other counties or countries. Farmers have seldom any means of sending their corn above a day's journey from their farms, or of sending it by sea to a distance, on their own account ; and the want of canals and the miserable state of the roads were great obstructions to carrying corn to a distance in former ages. The farmers in Norfolk, could not in these times supply the markets in Lancashire, however scarce and dear corn might be in that county ; far less could they supply the wants of foreign nations : and as the corn trade laboured under the same restrictions in foreign countries, we cannot wonder at the inequality of the prices in these ages ; of its being extremely cheap in some countries, while famine raged in others. The general liberty to import corn was rendered of no use by the general prohibition against exporting it, as the wants of a country cannot be supplied by importation, unless there is liberty to export from other countries.

The security of intercourse by sea, by the extirpation of pirates, the suppression of monopolies and licenses to particular merchants, the relaxation of the laws against engrossers, the security of property and the encouragement given to corn

merchants, which have taken place since the revolution, have induced great numbers of men of capital to engage in the corn trade ; to supply the wants of counties and countries where corn is scarce, from the superfluous produce of others, which effectually prevents corn from ever being so very cheap or so very dear in any particular county or country, as was frequently the case in former ages. And besides these powerful causes of equalising the price of corn in the different kingdoms of Europe, the extensive improvement of the dry land, by liming and marling, must have had a powerful effect in equalising the general produce in wet and dry years in Britain ; the dry land being most productive in wet years, when the clay lands fail, and *vice versa*. When the necessary effects of all these causes are attended to, it appears astonishing, that any man of common observation and candour, should impute the greater equality of prices which have taken place since the revolution, to the bounties on exporting, and the duties on importing corn.



## S E C T. III.

*Of the Causes of the low Price of Corn, during the first Half of the last Century, and of its high Price since.*

To ascertain these causes, it is necessary to attend to the changes which have taken place in the circumstances of the people who are the buyers of food in Britain, since the accession of Henry VII.

In the beginning of the first section of this chapter, it was observed, that the proprietors of land in England, had, in general, previous to that period, gratified their pride, by vying with each other in power, and for that purpose divided their estates into small possessions, to increase the number of their military tenants; that when they were prevented by new laws, rigorously executed by Henry, from indulging their pride in that way, they gradually became fond of vying with each other in fine clothes, houses and furniture, &c : that as they could not be supplied with these in the country, and could only obtain them from foreigners, and must pay for them with their rents, or the produce of their lands ; these circumstances induced them to let their lands to those who could give the

highest rents, instead of letting them, as formerly, for military services. This change totally altered the situation of the occupiers of the land, as a man who occupied as much land as was sufficient to maintain himself and family, could give his lord personal attendance, but could give little or no rent. To pay a full rent, the occupier must not have a greater number of labourers than are necessary for the farm, which, though the land was continued in tillage, would require only a third, and frequently not a fourth part of the people who formerly occupied it as military tenants. Hence, two-thirds, and in many instances, three-fourths of the people, were, by that change, rendered destitute, and had no way of obtaining subsistence but by begging or stealing. And as they had nothing to give to the different tradesmen, whom they formerly employed, to weave their coarse clothes, and make their furniture, &c. a large proportion of these tradesmen would also be rendered destitute, and driven to begging or stealing. It is obvious that this change would only take place gradually. Many landlords, of compassionate dispositions, would suffer pecuniary loss, rather than render their tenants destitute; many would keep them to gratify their pride, by their cringing behaviour, and many would be obliged to keep a few of their small tenants, for want of men of capital to take large farms, but the evil would gradually

increase. It is necessary also to remark, that the military tenants used the greatest part of the produce of their lands in their own families; but, though still in need of the same quantity of food, they could not buy it from those who occupied their former possessions, having nothing to give for it but personal labour, so that those for whose labour the farmers had no use, could not buy any food, which would lessen the demand for it, and bring down its price; and as corn was not at that time allowed to be exported, and as wool and skins were allowed to be exported, many farmers thought it more profitable to turn their lands into pasture, than to continue them in tillage; a practice which increased so much, that towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, many proprietors and farmers had fifteen, twenty, and some twenty-four thousand sheep upon good arable land. As a farmer can manage a much greater quantity of land in pasture, than in tillage, and with much fewer servants, it is obvious, that the number of tenants and country labourers, must have decreased in proportion to the quantity of land turned into pasture. So that instead of two-thirds, or three-fourths of these people being rendered destitute, as formerly stated, upon the supposition of the land being kept in tillage, nine-tenths of them would be rendered destitute, where the lands were converted into sheep pasture.



Some of the most industrious and enterprising of the country tradesmen, seem to have endeavoured to earn a living by manufacturing cloth for sale, as an act of Parliament was passed in the 25th of Henry VIII., prohibiting any person from making cloth, except the inhabitants of certain cities and towns therein named; and an act of Parliament was passed, in the reign of Edward VI. prohibiting every person from making woollen cloth *who had not served an apprenticeship of seven years*. It also appears, that some of the small tenants and labourers had been endeavouring to get their sons instructed in manufactures, as, by an act in the fifth year of Elizabeth, certain tradesmen were prohibited *from taking the children of labourers as apprentices*, and by the same act, no person was allowed to work at any trade, *to which he had not served an apprenticeship*, and every person was prohibited from taking above a certain number of apprentices. Hence, it appears, that in proportion as a greater number of small tenants and country tradesmen lost their usual means of subsistence, the borough corporations obtained severer laws, to prevent them or their children from getting employment as manufacturers. These miserable people, therefore, could only subsist by begging or stealing. And we are accordingly informed by history, that the number of beggars and thieves increased, as a greater number of small ten-

ants were turned out of their possessions. And the number of beggars and thieves was also considerably increased by the suppression of the monasteries, by which above fifty thousand monks, and a much greater number of people, who had been supported by them, were deprived of the means of subsistence, and forced to beg or steal. As so many hundreds of thousands of people were, by these causes, deprived of the means of earning a living, and therefore must beg or steal, or die of hunger, it is astonishing that laws against begging could have been thought of at that time. Yet acts of Parliament were passed, declaring beggars vagabonds and felons, and making them liable, upon the third offence, to capital punishment; it was also enacted, that beggars above fourteen years of age, should be bored through the ear, and whipped, unless some person would hire them for a year. But it is obvious, that very few could be protected in that way, when the country was swarming with people, for whom there was no employment. Nothing could exceed the cruelty of enacting such laws, when such numbers of people were reduced to beggary, by a want of employment.

Sir F. M. Eden, in his History of the Poor Laws, says, "That severer laws never were issued than during the reigns of Henry VIII. and Eliza-

“ beth, or more rigorously executed; yet ne-  
 “ ver did the unrelenting vengeance of justice  
 “ prove more ineffectual.” And, to show the  
 disordered state of the kingdom, he gives the fol-  
 lowing speech of an eminent justice of the peace  
 in Somersetshire, from Strype’s Annals: “ That  
 “ forty persons had been executed there in a  
 “ year, for robberies, thefts, and other felonies;  
 “ thirty-five burned in the hand; thirty-seven  
 “ whipped, and an hundred and eighty-three dis-  
 “ charged. That those who were discharged,  
 “ were most wicked and desperate persons, who  
 “ never could come to any good, because they  
 “ would not work, and none would take them in-  
 “ to service. That notwithstanding the great  
 “ number of indictments, the fifth part of the  
 “ felons in the county were not tried, and the  
 “ greater number escaped censure, either from  
 “ their superior cunning, the remissness of the  
 “ magistrates, or the foolish lenity of the people.  
 “ That the rapines committed, by the infinite  
 “ number of wicked, wandering, idle people, were  
 “ intolerable to the poor countrymen, and obliged  
 “ them to a perpetual watch of their sheep-folds,  
 “ pastures, woods, and corn-fields. That the  
 “ other counties of England were in no better  
 “ condition than Somersetshire, and many of  
 “ them were even in a worse. That there were  
 “ at least three or four hundred able-bodied vaga-



“ bonds, in every county, who lived by theft and  
 “ rapine, and who sometimes met in troops, to  
 “ the number of fifty or sixty, and committed  
 “ spoil on the inhabitants, and that the magis-  
 “ trates were awed, by the threats of these con-  
 “ federacies, from executing justice on the of-  
 “ fenders.”

The justice, in this speech, very properly com-  
 miserates the situation of the people of the coun-  
 try, who had land or wages to support them, and  
 who were oppressed by thieves and beggars. But  
 certainly these miserable beings were much great-  
 er objects of compassion than the former, having  
 been driven from their lands by the owners, and  
 prevented, by the cruel selfishness of the incorpo-  
 rated tradesmen, from obtaining some relief by  
 working at manufactures, while only a small part  
 of the whole number could be employed in agri-  
 culture; and the situation of those who were  
 stout and healthy, but could not find employment,  
 was much worse than that of the infirm, whose  
 appearance might procure them a miserable sub-  
 sistence by begging; whereas the former, having  
 no chance of obtaining subsistence in that way,  
 must either steal or die of hunger. In such des-  
 perate circumstances, it was natural for them to  
 associate together, and to concert measures for a-  
 voiding present starvation, by robbing or stealing.

It was cruel, in this justice, to upbraid people, in such circumstances, for their idleness, and that nobody would hire them.

As so very great a number of the people were reduced to beggary, the demand for corn by those who could pay for it, was proportionally lessened; on which account, as has been stated, page 133, such extensive tracts of the arable land had been turned to pasture, that the legislature found it necessary to check that practice, by laws for keeping up farm-houses, and for preventing any person from having above two thousand sheep. Yet the profits from grazing had been so much superior to tillage, that the practice was continued, in defiance of the laws; and Sir Anthony Roper, in the year 1636, paid a fine of four thousand pounds for having a much greater number of sheep than the law allowed; and, in the same year, many others were also fined on the same account, and many compounded; which is a proof, that very great quantities of arable land had been gradually converted into pasture; consequently, though the number of the miserable people, who had no employment, must have been very much reduced by deaths, yet the price of corn might frequently be very high, there being no corn-merchants to supply a deficiency, by importation from different counties or countries.

The profits from pasture continued higher than from corn, until the year 1647, when an act of parliament was passed, prohibiting the exportation of wool and woollen yarn. And the exportation of these articles was prohibited, under penalties much more severe, at the Restoration; which laws continue in force.

These laws occasioned a very material reduction in the profits of grass-land; but, as high duties were payable upon the exportation of corn, the occupiers would be deterred, on that account, from plowing up their pastures. By a pamphlet, published in 1677, cited by the author of *Memoirs of Wool*, it appears, that great complaints were made at that time, by landlords and tenants, against these new laws; by which they asserted, that wool was reduced, from sixteen pounds, to four or five pounds, a sack. But, as the price of corn did not fall lower, during the remainder of that century, than it was before the commencement of the civil wars, we must conclude that very little grass-land had been ploughed up.

It was observed, in the first section of this chapter, that bounties were given, in 1689, upon corn exported; yet, as the duties upon exportation were still payable, the bounties could only be considered as deductions from these duties: that



wheat still paid a duty of 15s. a quarter upon exportation, and other grains in proportion. Such high duties must have formed a powerful obstruction to ploughing up pastures.

But after the year 1700, when these duties upon exporting corn were wholly taken off, and the bounties continued, while the prohibition against exporting wool also continued, it was then the interest of farmers to plough up as much of their pastures, which were in proper condition, as their landlords would allow. The consequent increase of land in corn, with the great improvements which were after that period carried on, in Norfolk and many other counties, occasioned by security of property and increase of capital, fully accounts for an increasing quantity of corn from the year 1700.

It must be admitted, that, however great the number of people are who need food, if they have nothing to give for it, such poor people cannot raise its price; that can only be done by an increase of buyers, who can pay for it with money, or such articles as the owners of the food wish to obtain. Hence, though manufacturers increased in number, and became more and more expert, after the Revolution, they did not, for many years, increase so fast as the produce of corn; on which account, considerable quantities were an-

nually exported to foreigners, for which different kinds of manufactures were imported as payment.

It appears, from the histories of commerce, that, even so late as the year 1720, the greatest part of the copper, brass, and cast-iron utensils, for culinary and other purposes, porcelain, stone, delf, earthen ware, fire-arms, and other engines of war, were imported from Holland and Hamburgh. That velvets, silks, mirrors, and crystal-glass of all kinds, bottles, watches, jewellery, coaches, chairs, gold and silver laces, paper of all sorts for writing, printing, and for rooms, were imported from France and Italy; that linen, cambrics, and laces, were imported from Flanders, besides toys, and many other articles, from these and other countries. All of which imported manufactures, must have lessened the demand for labourers at home, and, by lowering wages, lessened their ability to pay for food. Hence, while the wages were kept down by the importation of manufactures, the labourers who had families, could not buy full quantities of food, and must have bought less as the price advanced; the price, therefore, could only be raised by the merchants in the eastern or corn counties, who were enabled, by the bounties, to sell it to manufacturers in Holland, Flanders, and in France, much cheaper than to

our own manufacturers on the west side of the island.

Fortunately, these foreign manufacturers had no occasion to give very high prices, as they could be fully, and were always in part, supplied by importation from Poland, and other countries where corn was cheap, because the labourers were unable to give much for it. The demand from abroad could not, on these accounts, raise the price very high; and if the increasing quantity produced was sufficient to supply the increasing number of manufacturers, and other people who could pay for food at home, the price might, as it did, continue moderate for many years, though the bounty evidently enabled the exporters to give so much more for it, which must have raised its price.

The number of manufacturers, and the improvements in the arts of manufacturing, had, for centuries, been gradually increasing in Britain, and the importation of manufactures had been, for many years, decreasing, until about the year 1760, when the exports were about equal to the imports; after that period, the excess of manufactures exported, above what were imported, has been gradually increasing.



In the first section of the preceding fourth chapter, it was shown, that an increase of capital employed in manufacturing must raise wages; and accordingly wages have advanced in Britain with the increase of that cause, and as the advance of wages enables the labourers to buy a full quantity of food when cheap; and to buy a larger part when dear, than they could buy when their wages were lower; the gradual increase in the number of manufacturers, therefore, with the gradual advance of their wages, must have occasioned a corresponding increase in the demand for food: besides, as there has also been a rapid increase of men who derive great revenues from capital lent, and also men who derive great revenues from employing capital in manufactures, in mercantile and other lines of business, besides people in the learned professions, and others, whose number and revenues increase with the opulence of society; these people not only can buy full quantities of food for themselves, but can and do buy food for great numbers of servants, horses, and dogs. Hence, when the demand for food, occasioned by these different causes, increases faster than the increase of produce, the price must rise in proportion to the deficiency, and to the riches of the buyers. And it is evident, that the operation of these causes has gradually increased the

demand, and raised the price of corn, since the year 1760.

The very high prices to which corn advanced in 1795, and have since continued, were evidently occasioned by the general war in Europe, which lessens the quantity and increases the demand for corn; and by the interruption of commerce.

From these observations it is evident, that the low price of corn, during the first half of the last century, was owing to a greater quantity being raised than was necessary to supply the demand of the people *who could pay for it*; and that the price would necessarily have been lower, if no bounty had been allowed on exportation. That the rise in the price of corn since, has been occasioned by the demand having increased faster than the increase of the produce; and the high duties on importation, by preventing the deficiency from being supplied from foreign countries, has greatly increased the evil. The alteration of these laws, in 1773, was adopted in consequence of the continued advance of prices, to prevent them from rising higher; and could not, therefore, be the cause of that advance, as has been shamefully asserted by the advocates for the corn laws.

## S E C T. IV.

*Of the Necessity of Bounties on exporting, and Duties on importing Corn, for the Encouragement of Tillage; and of their Effects in promoting that End.*

EVERY person, acquainted with agriculture, will admit, that taking many successive crops of white corn, impoverishes the richest land; which practice, being general in former ages, greatly lessened the national produce. The great superiority of the modern practice, consists in very seldom taking two successive crops of white corn; in taking few crops of white corn, though turnips or other black crops do intervene, even upon rich soils, before they are laid into grass; and in continuing the land in grass two, three, four, five, six, or more years, according as it is poorer, before it is again ploughed for corn: and it is found, from experience, that even what may be considered good land, is impoverished, when it is only one year in four in grass, unless more putrescent manure can be obtained than the farm produces. But notwithstanding that these principles are now generally admitted, yet, as the value of a good crop of corn is much greater than pasture, farmers are strongly tempted to plough up their pastures



too soon; and nineteen out of twenty suffer, more or less, by yielding to the temptation, being prompted by the hope of a good crop, and by their natural liking to, and frequent need of, present profit. Farmers having, on these accounts, greatly injured their land by having too much in tillage, landlords have been obliged to restrain their tenants from tilling above a certain quantity; and these restrictions not only serve the landlords, by preventing their land from being impoverished by over-cropping, but also serve the society, by increasing the annual produce of food. Yet so strong are the temptations which farmers are under to have land in corn, that great numbers of them have been prosecuted, and found liable in heavy damages for having *too much*, whereas there has not been one instance of a tenant being prosecuted for having *too little* of his land in corn.

When these different facts are attended to, it must appear ridiculous in the extreme, that a parliament, composed almost entirely of owners of land, should enact a law, the sole purpose of which was to induce farmers to have more of their land in corn. Yet the preamble to the act of 1700, establishing bounties on corn exported, certainly was meant to convey the idea, that it was enacted for that purpose only. And the lords of the committee of privy council explicitly

declare, that they understood that to be the intention of the act ; as, in the 14th paragraph of their representation, they say, “ And it may well “ be doubted, whether the exportation which is necessary to encourage tillage, in a degree sufficient for the home supply, would take place, if “ this bounty should be withdrawn.” They evidently here mean, that it is doubtful if a sufficient quantity of corn would be sown. And Mr Malthus, when endeavouring to show the necessity of bounties, speaking of the farmers, says\*,—“ Finding, therefore, that tillage would not answer to “ them, they would, of course, neglect the plough, “ and gradually lay more of their land into pasture.” It is evident, from these instances, that the promoters of the laws wished to have it believed, that the bounties would encourage all tenants of tillage-farms to have more of their land in corn. Yet we cannot suppose, that the original promoters of the law, or the lords of the committee, could mean, that the law should have effects which would be so very injurious to their own interest as landlords. We must suppose, therefore, that they threw out that hypocritical pretence, to cover the real intention of the law, which was, to raise the price of corn and the rent of land. Several facts are inserted in the first

\* Chapter of Bounties on exporting Corn, p. 456.

section of this chapter to prove, that this was the sole intention of the law; to which I shall here add two or three more. When the lords of the committee, in the 14th paragraph of their representation, say, “ that the bounty may be considered as a compensation to the farmer, for “ the restraints imposed on his trade,’ they must mean, that, as he suffers by being debarred from sending his corn to the highest market abroad in dear years, he, in justice, is entitled to a bounty to raise its price, when it is low, as a compensation. And when they afterwards, in the same paragraph, say, “ Without the aid, therefore, of “ the bounty, the merchants of the countries, before mentioned, would be able to undersell our “ corn-factors in foreign markets,” they must mean, that, as these corn-factors could not stand a competition with foreign merchants abroad, unless they could either buy corn cheaper at home, or receive a bounty, to enable them to sell it as low in foreign markets as foreign merchants. The bounty, therefore, is given to enable corn-factors to give a high price at home, and to sell it low in foreign markets. In like manner, when Mr Malthus says\*, “ Nothing can be more obvious, than “ that the competition of farmers, who pay few or

\* In his Chapter of Bounties on the Exportation of Corn, p. 460.



“ no taxes, and little comparative rent for their  
 “ land, must lower the profits of those who labour  
 “ under these disadvantages, and, other things be-  
 “ ing equal, must ultimately justle them out of the  
 “ market ; and it is also obvious, that the boun-  
 “ ty to those who labour under these disadvan-  
 “ tages, must tend to raise their profits, and give  
 “ them a fairer chance of standing the competi-  
 “ tion with the others ;” he must mean, that the  
 bounty, by raising the price of corn, raises the  
 profits of farmers.

From these instances, and those in the pre-  
 ceding section, it must be admitted, that, not-  
 withstanding that none of the advocates for these  
 laws, except Mr Arthur Young, have acknow-  
 ledged, that the bounties were established for the  
 purpose of raising the price of corn and the rent  
 of land, no other conclusion can be drawn from  
 their ambiguous and sophistical writings ; or from  
 the necessary consequences of giving a bounty to  
 those who take corn out of our own markets to send  
 to foreigners, which must raise the price at home,  
 and lower it in the markets to which it is sent.

Dr Smith says justly \*, “ To encourage the

\* Wealth of Nations. Chapter of Bounties. Vol. II. Page  
 279.

“ production of any commodity, a bounty upon  
 “ production, one should imagine, would have a  
 “ more direct operation, than one upon exporta-  
 “ tion. It would, besides, impose only one tax up-  
 “ on the people, that which they must contribute,  
 “ in order to pay the bounty. Instead of raising,  
 “ it would tend to lower, the price of the commo-  
 “ dity in the home market; and thereby, instead  
 “ of imposing a second tax upon the people, it  
 “ might, at least in part, repay them for what  
 “ they had contributed to the bounty.” And,  
 accordingly, it must be admitted, that encourag-  
 ing the improvement of land, by enclosing, drain-  
 ing, liming, marling, &c., would be incomparably  
 more effectual, in promoting an increase of the an-  
 nual production of food, than raising its price by a  
 bounty on its exportation. But there was no oc-  
 casion for a bounty to promote these important  
 improvements; it was only necessary to annul  
 the laws enforcing tythes, and those which the  
 owners of land, for their own interest, and to gra-  
 tify their pride, had formed against the occupiers,  
 some of which are pointed out in the 3d section  
 of the preceding 4th chapter. It was a cruel  
 mockery, to continue those laws which form such  
 powerful obstructions to the improvement of land,  
 yet to pretend that the bounty on exporting corn,  
 was given for the sole purpose of encouraging its  
 production, that the consumers might have it in

plenty. The principal advantage that these people can derive from its being in plenty is, by obtaining it cheap.—But if they are to pay a bounty of 5s. a quarter on wheat to those who carry it to foreigners, the greater the quantity that is produced, the more money they have to pay for exporting it, without obtaining their own supply any cheaper in consequence of the plenty. On the contrary, the bounty must always keep the price of wheat at least 5s. above the level of the market, besides the danger of the exportation being carried so far, by the bounty, as to occasion a scarcity at home. Increasing the production of corn, therefore, by high bounties on exporting it to foreigners, even if that could be effected, is tantalizing the buyers at home in the most cruel and provoking manner.

Thus it is evident, that, so far from there being a necessity of encouraging the occupiers of arable land to have more of it in corn, they are, naturally, under strong temptations to have too much in corn; increasing that quantity, therefore, instead of increasing, would diminish the annual produce of food: That the promoters of the law, by restricting their tenants in that particular, show, that they had no intention of increasing the quantity of land in tillage: That that pretence was thrown out to cover their real design, which was,



to raise the price of food and the rent of land; and that annulling the laws which obstruct the improvement of land, would be incomparably more effectual to increase the quantity of food, than advancing its price by bounties on exportation, and duties on importation.

#### SECT. V.

*Of the Assertions, that Corn, being exported, is a Proof, that the People are fully supplied at Home: that it is a Surplus Quantity of Produce in plentiful Years, by the Exportation of which the Nation is enriched; and by prohibiting its Exportation, when Crops are bad, it supplies the People at Home, and prevents them from being dependent on foreign Nations: and, that the liberty to import, when Crops are very bad, prevents the Price from rising so high as to distress the Poor.*

VERY great quantities of corn have been annually exported from Poland for centuries, while the bulk of the people were starving for want. Great numbers of people in the south and west of Ireland, subsist by renting small pieces of land, which produce potatoes, and support a cow and a hog or two; but these people are obliged to live

upon skimmed milk and potatoes, as the hogs and whole produce of butter must be sold to pay the rent, and to purchase the few necessary articles that even such poor people require. And there is an annual exportation of corn from the cultivated parts of every country to towns, yet it is too obvious, that many families of labourers, of widows and orphans, who live in the country, are in great want. Nor can we suppose, that the low classes of the people are fully supplied with wine, in every country from whence that article is exported. The owners of corn and wine will always sell them to the highest bidders; and, consequently, the rich obtain full quantities, even in years of scarcity, while the poor must purchase less as the price is higher.

As these facts are so well known, it is quite astonishing, that any person, of common sense, should assert, that exportation of corn is a proof, that the people of the country are fully supplied. Yet that position has been either directly asserted or inferred, not only by all the advocates for the corn laws in their sophistical reasonings, but also by the committee of council in their representation in 1790, and by the committee of the house of commons in 1804. The former, in the second paragraph of their representation, say, "That  
 " this kingdom, which, in former times, used to

“ produce more corn than was *necessary for the*  
 “ *inhabitants*, has, of late years, been under the  
 “ necessity of depending on the produce of fo-  
 “ reign countries for a part of its supply.” And  
 the committee of the house of commons, near  
 the end of their report, say, “ That, in the  
 “ course of years, when the regulations were  
 “ most favourable to the growers, and when the  
 “ least check was put upon the export trade,  
 “ the export of corn from this kingdom, for more  
 “ than sixty years in succession, produced, an-  
 “ nually, six or seven hundred thousand pounds,  
 “ leaving besides, at a regular and moderate  
 “ price, *an ample sufficiency for the home con-*  
 “ *sumption.*” As we cannot suppose, that such  
 men made these ridiculous assertions from igno-  
 rance, we must conclude, that they were advan-  
 ced for the purpose of deception. And it must  
 also be for that purpose that they assert, that ex-  
 porting corn enriches, and that importing it im-  
 poverishes a nation. If these sentiments were  
 just, the people of Poland, Ireland, and the High-  
 lands of Scotland, ought to be immensely rich,  
 as these have been exporting countries of corn,  
 or cattle, for centuries; and as Holland and the  
 manufacturing districts of England have been for  
 centuries importing countries, they should now  
 be in great poverty. Yet the fact is, that the



people in these countries are rich, while those of the former are miserably poor.

In the first section of the preceding chapter, it was shown, that an exportation of food from a populous country must impoverish the people who have no land, and that an importation must enrich them; and the reasons there adduced, are fully supported by the change which has gradually taken place in the circumstances of the people of England, since the time of Henry VII., as pointed out in the third section of this chapter.

In countries where food is plenty, and the wages of labour so high as to enable the labourers to buy a sufficiency, as in America, the number of people is found to double in twenty or twenty-five years. Hence, as there were about six millions of people in Britain at the revolution, if the whole could have had a sufficiency of food, their number would have been double in thirty years, even allowing for the check to their increase by cities and towns; that is, they would have been twelve millions in the year 1720. And even allowing thirty-five years for redoubling, on account of the additional number and greatness of the cities and towns, the number should have been twenty-four millions in the year 1755. And on account of the continuing increase of the number and greatness of the cities

and towns, if forty years are allowed for doubling again, there should have been forty-eight millions in the year 1795, and about sixty millions in the year 1810. But as the actual number has not been found to exceed twelve millions, and as the principal cause of the immense deficiency must be imputed to their inability to procure food, it is absurd to boast of corn having been for so many years exported as a proof of the prosperity of the country, and that the people were fully supplied; when, on the contrary, that exportation has not only impoverished the people, by raising the price of food, but by want and misery has, in a very high degree, prevented their increase.

It has been shown in the preceding section, that the bounty, by inducing occupiers to overcrop their land, might diminish, but could not increase the annual produce of corn; and therefore could only occasion a surplus, by raising the price so high as to reduce a great proportion of the people to short allowance, which must diminish their number. Yet several of the late writers in favour of these laws, assert, as a proof that they are wisely formed, and advantageous to the people, that by preventing the exportation of the surplus thus obtained, the nation is supplied, when crops are bad, independent of foreign nations. As the exportation, however, was only stopped three years, from

1700 to 1757, viz. in 1709, in 1740, and in 1741, it is obvious, that wheat was raised in price at least five shillings a quarter, during fifty three years of that period, for the advantage, according to these writers, of having the whole crop of these three years confined to the home consumption. But though exportation was stopped these three years, yet as importation, which might have much more effectually relieved the people, was prevented by exorbitant duties, they obtained no compensation whatever for having the price of bread raised upon them for so many years by the bounty.

This property, which late writers have ascribed to these laws, had not been discovered in 1758, when Mr Charles Smith wrote his celebrated tracts on the corn trade, in which he ascribes to them several other properties equally fictitious. These tracts being considered as furnishing unanswerable reasons in favour of the corn laws, were re-published in 1804; in the fifty-sixth page of which he says, “and we are fully persuaded no better laws, “in general, for conducting this affair, can be “framed or delivered, how much soever in particular instances they may be improved. Let us “reflect once more upon *what they say*.

“To the Farmer—Till your land, and fear not  
“having so great a plenty as to be a burden and



“ loss to you, for we will give a bounty for the  
 “ exportation of *what can be spared*.

“ To the People—Be not uneasy at the expor-  
 “ tation of corn; for when it *begins to grow dear*,  
 “ the bounty shall cease, and when it is dear it  
 “ shall be imported at such *a moderate and proper*  
 “ *duty*, as, whilst it adds *so little to the price as not*  
 “ *to distress you*, shall yet prevent so great a quan-  
 “ tity being thrown in, as may deter our own farm-  
 “ ers from tillage; nay, even when it becomes ne-  
 “ cessary, it shall be imported duty free.”

In the beginning of this quotation, Mr Smith gives his unqualified approbation of these laws, yet the properties which he imputes to them, are so evidently fictitious, that they could not have been the foundation of that approbation. Personifying these laws, he makes them, in the first place, exhort the farmers “ to till their land.” The impropriety of which exhortation has been shown in the preceding section. And as Mr Smith was well informed in country business, and lived in Essex, where the injurious effects of over-cropping had been long known, and were, in his time, carefully guarded against by every prudent landlord; his pretending that the bounty was necessary to encourage farmers *to till more of their land* is truly astonishing. And as it cannot be imputed to ig-

norance, his intention must have been to deceive. The address of the laws to the people is equally fallacious. Mr Smith knew, that by the law of 1700, the bounty was paid, until the price of wheat was forty-eight shillings a quarter ; and that the people, knowing this circumstance, were so much irritated, upon seeing corn exported, when prices were so high, that there were frequent public commotions, though the average price of wheat in Britain had never been so high as forty-eight shillings a quarter, when he wrote his tracts. It was therefore mocking the people, to say, “ that they need “ not be afraid of exportation, as the bounty should “ cease, when corn *begins to grow dear.*” If that had been the intention of the law, the bounty should have stopped, when the price exceeded twenty-five shillings a quarter in the cities and manufacturing districts, without being regulated in any degree, by the price, in the thinly inhabited and exporting parts of the country. It is equally insulting to the people to say, that when *corn is dear*, it shall be imported “ *at such a moderate and “ proper duty,*” as if the duties were really low ; whereas he knew that the duty payable on wheat imported, was at that time, sixteen shillings a quarter, when the price was below fifty-three shillings and four-pence ; and eight shillings, when the price was above that to eighty shillings ; and five shillings and four-pence, when the price was above eighty

shillings. As he knew that millions of people could not purchase a sufficiency of bread, when wheat was below forty shillings, it was cruel and insulting to call such high duties on the importation of corn moderate, when its price was so very high, and to say that they were necessary, under the false and hypocritical pretence, that so great a quantity might be thrown in as would *deter our own farmers from tillage.*

Mr Smith not only makes the laws insult the poor, but he also makes them assert a direct falsehood, viz. "that when it becomes necessary, corn shall be imported duty free;" whereas he knew, that by the law, at that time, wheat imported, payed a duty of five shillings and four-pence a quarter, however high the price might be, and other grain also paid proportional duties. The executive had, indeed, sometimes found it necessary, for allaying civil commotions, to suspend the law, and to allow a free importation; but it was not mitigated by the legislature until the year 1773.

As the people were much irritated by the high price of corn, when Mr Smith wrote, we cannot suppose that he meant to add to that irritation by using insulting language; we must therefore suppose, that being conscious that the sole intention of the laws was to raise the price of corn and the



rent of land, which could not be openly acknowledged; and being prompted strongly by interest to support them, he thought that assuming to the laws a tendency to increase the quantity of land in tillage, though false, would gull the people, and cover that base intention. And it is evidently the same selfish principle which induces proprietors of land to declaim against importation, under that false pretence, while they are conscious that it requires their constant attention to prevent their tenants from ploughing too much. But what is still more extraordinary, these men who oppose importation, under the pretence that, by lowering the price of corn, it will discourage tillage, rail against the laws of 1773, which allowed importation of corn at lower prices than formerly, under the pretence that it had been the cause of the price rising. If the alteration did raise the price, that must encourage tillage, which they pretend to be anxious to promote. And the committee of the House of Commons, in 1804, actually gives these absurd and contradictory reasons, as the foundation of their proposed alteration of the importation law, in the last paragraph of their report. And the importation of wheat was, according to that recommendation, subjected to the high duties until the price should be above sixty-three shillings a quarter.

It is remarkable, that Mr C. Smith, in the above quotation, tells the people, not to be uneasy at the exportation of corn, because, “when it is dear, it *“ shall be imported;”* which implies, that there always is a great store of corn somewhere ready to supply the wants of the nation, when prices are such as the framers of the laws judged necessary *to encourage tillage.* But as neither Mr Smith nor any other supporter of these laws, has informed us where such a store of corn is kept, we must suppose, that they are conscious, that by allowing a free importation, a sufficient supply could always be got. If that is the case, and their anxiety to prevent importation is a clear proof that they think it is, how base and detestable is it, to prevent the poor from being supplied from this source, under the false and hypocritical pretence of discouraging tillage?

But though there could seldom, if ever, be a want of a supply of corn from abroad, if the trade were, and had always been free, yet the regulations of the corn laws must have a great effect in diminishing that resource, by preventing the nations who could supply us, from raising more corn than they need themselves. Hence, when our crops fail, we have no resource, but by obtaining, at a high price, a share of the crops of other coun-

tries, where such laws as ours have not been enacted.

It deserves particular remark, that these laws are formed upon such narrow principles, that if generally adopted, they would have no effect but to confine every nation to the produce of its own country. As it is obvious, that the bounty on exportation could have no effect, if all foreign nations, like ours, prohibited importation, nor could we be supplied from abroad, when in want, if foreign nations were to prohibit exportation.

The committee of privy council, in the ninth paragraph of their representation, say justly, “that the circulation of corn, within every kingdom, ought to be free, so that the surplus of one part may supply the deficiencies of others, and the price throughout the whole country may be brought, as near as possible, to a level.” Yet these lords were so blinded by interest, that they did not see that these reasons operate with equal force in favour of a free trade among nations, that the surplus in some countries might supply the deficiencies in others. And as there is a much greater difference in the climates of different countries than in the provinces of any nation in Europe, there is a greater chance that the crops would always be so good in some countries, as to mitigate



the wants of the people in the countries where they were bad. But the discovery of America has made a free trade in every article of common food, of much greater importance to the people of Europe than it was before that æra. Before that period, as all the countries of Europe were fully peopled, in proportion to their produce, the increase of people being greater than the increase of food, when crops were bad in any country, the people could only be relieved by purchasing corn from countries where the crops were better; which would raise the price in these, and bring the price of corn, and the situation of the poor, in the different countries, nearer to a level: the extreme misery of the poor, where crops were bad, might be mitigated by increasing the miseries of the poor where they were good.

But as there was plenty of unoccupied, fertile land, in the British colonies in America, if their produce had been allowed to be freely imported at all prices, the exports from that country would have increased with the increase of its people; which would have supplied the wants of the increasing number of people in Britain, without injuring the poor in America. And as the plenty of land would have made agriculture the most profitable employment, very few would have engaged in manufactures; consequently there would have

been an increasing demand for manufactures from Britain, as the export of food from America increased. And as the climates of the provinces of America are so different from one another, and from that of Britain, the annual produce of the whole would be nearly equal, and the prices always reasonable.

Such a trade must have been equally beneficial to both nations—supplying the cultivators in America with manufactures, and supplying the manufacturers in Britain with food and materials for their manufactures.

But this natural and beneficial trade was first prevented by a law in 1670, imposing exorbitant duties on corn imported; which law has, with some modifications, been continued. The Americans, therefore, were, by that law, debarred from the British market; and as they were also debarred by another British law from trading with any of the nations of Europe north of Cape Finisterre, they could only depend upon the demand for food at home, and the chance of a scarcity in the countries south of that Cape. These restrictions prevented the Americans, before their independency, from having a large surplus at any time. And the struggle for independency which impoverished that nation; the convulsions in Europe since the French

revolution; the disputes with Britain, and continuation of the corn laws, must have formed great checks to the cultivation of that country, and to their ability to supply the wants of Europe; so that the corn laws, instead of being beneficial to the people, have greatly increased their miseries, not only by raising the price of food, but by obstructing the demand for manufactures.

From these facts and observations, it is evident that the exportation of corn from a country is no proof that the inhabitants are fully supplied—that the corn laws could only occasion a surplus by checking population by want and misery—that prohibiting the exportation of food, so obtained, cannot be considered as a favour to the people, while importation, which would relieve them effectually, is prevented by high duties—that these high duties on importation, by discouraging cultivation in under-peopled countries, prevents sufficient quantities of corn being raised in these countries to supply the wants of the increasing number of our people, and has, with the differences with America, and different countries of Europe, been the cause of the late exorbitant prices.



## S E C T. VI.

*Of the Opinion that the Duties on Importing, and the Bounties on Exporting Food were necessary to put the Owners of Land and the Cultivators upon an equal Footing with Manufacturers.*

Mr Malthus begins his chapter on the corn laws as follows : “ It is acknowledged by Dr Smith, “ that the encouragement given to the industry “ of the towns, has turned more capital into that “ channel, than would otherwise have gone to it; “ and, if this be true, it follows, that the land “ must have less than its natural share; and under “ such a discouragement, we cannot reasonably “ expect that agriculture should be able to keep “ pace with manufactures. The corn laws of 1688 “ and 1700, did not do more than place them up- “ on an equality.” But though the admission of Dr Smith, and the conclusion here drawn from it be true, it does not follow, that these laws could put agriculture upon a level with manufactures, or in any degree induce men of capital and enterprise to go into the farming line—to increase by every practical improvement the annual produce of the land, which is, or ought to be, the object of every scheme for encouraging agriculture. After stating that material position so distinctly, the author

ought to have shown in what way manufactures were more encouraged than agriculture, and which way these laws would turn more capital into that line. But instead of that, he proceeds to vindicate them, not upon their tendency to produce that desirable effect, but upon their producing other effects, which had been, without the smallest foundation, ascribed to them by other writers, to which he has added a very extraordinary sentiment of his own; “ That the rent of land is an “ ingredient in the price of its produce, and that “ the corn laws are necessary to put the British “ farmer on a level with those of other countries “ whose rents are lower.” Whereas he must have known, that a farmer’s profits are not regulated solely by the price of the productions of his land, but also by the proportion that the rent bears to the quantity and price of those productions. He may, therefore, have a greater clear profit, when the price of the produce is low, if the rent is low, than when the price of the produce is high, if the rent be higher in proportion; as it must be admitted, that a tenant will be equally benefited by reducing his rent a hundred pounds, as by his obtaining a hundred pounds advance upon the productions of his land. The real question at issue, according to this statement of Mr Malthus, is, whether the people who have no land are to be allowed to import food, and reduce its price, which *may*

*reduce* the rents and profits of land-lords and farmers, who have leases, or shall they be restricted from importing food, by which its price is raised double or treble, for the sole purpose of raising the rent of land, and the profits of farmers who have leases.

After defending the corn laws upon these fallacious principles, he endeavours to defend them upon the principle of prudence, by declaiming on the danger of depending on foreign nations for a supply of food, which shall be examined afterwards, and he concludes by defending them upon the principle of justice, as follows:—"If throughout  
 " the commercial world, every kind of trade were  
 " perfectly free, one should undoubtedly feel the  
 " greatest reluctance in proposing any interruption to such a system of general liberty; and  
 " indeed, under such circumstances, agriculture  
 " would not need peculiar encouragements. But  
 " under the present universal prevalence of the  
 " commercial system, with all its different expedients of encouragement and restraint, it is folly to except from our attention the great manufacture of corn, which supports all the rest. The  
 " high duties paid upon the importation of foreign  
 " manufactures are so direct an encouragement  
 " to the manufacturing part of the society, that  
 " nothing but some encouragement of the same



“ kind, operating with the same force, can place  
 “ the manufacturers and cultivators of this coun-  
 “ try on a fair footing.”

“ The last sentence of this quotation is fallacious  
 in the extreme, as it implies that manufacturers  
 were in much more prosperous circumstances than  
 cultivators, in the year 1700; and that the corn  
 laws were then enacted for, and adequate to, the  
 purpose of raising the latter class of people to a  
 level with the former; whereas, the fact is, that  
 manufactures were at a very low ebb, and great  
 quantities were imported at that time, which is  
 admitted by this author, who begins his chapter  
 on the effects of the agricultural and commercial  
 systems, as follows :—“ About the middle of the  
 “ last century, we were genuinely, and in the  
 “ strict sense of the œconomists, an agricultural  
 “ nation. Our commerce and manufactures were,  
 “ however, then in a very respectable and thriv-  
 “ ing state; and if they had continued to bear the  
 “ same relative proportion to our agriculture, they  
 “ would evidently have gone on, increasing con-  
 “ siderably with the improving cultivation of the  
 “ country.” And in the next paragraph he adds,  
 “ We have now, however, stepped out of the agri-  
 “ cultural system, into a state in which the com-  
 “ mercial system clearly predominates.” As it  
 is here admitted that manufacturers were only on

a level with cultivators, about the middle of the last century, and as it cannot be denied, that they were much lower at its beginning, it must follow, that whatever superiority manufacturers have gained over cultivators, has been gained while the latter had all the assistance the corn laws could give them.

Dr. Smith, in the second chapter of the third book of the *Wealth of Nations*, points out several discouragements which the occupiers of land laboured under, in the ancient state of Europe, and near the end of that chapter, he says, “Through  
“ the greater part of Europe, the yeomanry are  
“ regarded as an inferior rank of people, even to  
“ the better sort of tradesmen and mechanics; and  
“ in all parts of Europe, to the great merchants  
“ and master manufacturers. It can seldom hap-  
“ pen, therefore, that a man of any considerable  
“ stock, should quit the superior, in order to place  
“ himself in an inferior station. Even in the pre-  
“ sent state of Europe, therefore, little stock is  
“ likely to go from any other profession to the im-  
“ provement of land in the way of farming.” And in the third section of the fourth chapter of this inquiry, it is shown, that farmers are still a degraded class, even in Britain; and that it is on that account, that farmers of talents and enterprise, near trading towns, lay out their spare capital in

trade, rather than in their own business. And it is evident, from the experience of one hundred and twelve years, that the corn laws have no tendency to relieve them from that degradation, or from any of the other discouraging circumstances, under which they labour, and by that means turn more capital into the agricultural line, nor were they intended to produce any effect of that kind. It has been shewn, in the first section of this chapter, that the sole intention for which they were enacted, was to raise the price of corn, and the rent of land; but as that base motive could not be acknowledged, Mr Malthus has, to deceive his readers, made the claim in the name of the cultivators, instead of the owners of land. He ought, in fairness, to have stated it thus: *That as bounties were given on exporting, and duties paid on importing manufactures, which raised their price, and increased the income of manufacturers; it was but doing justice to the owners of land that bounties should also be given on exporting, and duties paid on importing corn, to raise its price to increase their income.*

But though this claim is plausible, *supposing these two classes of people in equal need of assistance*, yet, even in that case, the position requires explanation to ascertain the degree of its justice.



Are the bounties on exporting, and duties on importing manufactures, as injurious to the owners of land, as the bounties on exporting, and the duties on importing corn, are to manufacturers? And do these articles, upon which bounties are paid, bear as great a proportion to the whole produce of manufactures as corn bears to the whole produce of food? It must be admitted that unless these queries can be answered in the affirmative, the claim of the owners of land is not founded on justice, even *supposing the two classes in equal need of assistance.*

It must be obvious, that giving a bounty of five shillings a quarter on wheat exported, must raise its price so much, in all the markets of Britain; consequently, if a manufacturer uses six quarters in his family, annually, the bounty acts as a direct tax of thirty shillings a year upon him, and every house-holder must pay a tax of five shillings, for every quarter of wheat used in his family; where, as it cannot be pretended, that the bounties which are paid on exporting manufactures, many of which are only drawbacks of duties, formerly paid upon the materials, can form any thing near so heavy a tax upon the owners of land.

But though this advance upon a manufacturer's food, occasioned by the bounty, is great, yet it is

a mere trifle, when compared with the advance which has been occasioned by the high duties on its importation.

If the inhabitants of America, and other under-peopled countries, had always been allowed to send the produce of their land to Britain, their interest would have prompted them to cultivate more, as the demand for its produce increased, which would have prevented any considerable rise of price in consequence of war in Europe; and consequently, it is probable, that, in that case, wheat would seldom if ever have exceeded forty shillings a quarter, or salt beef and pork, three-pence a pound in this country \*. Hence, as wheat has been often above six pounds a quarter, it is obvious, that the annual expence of a manufacturer, who requires six quarters for his family, is twenty-four pounds more, when wheat is at six pounds, than it would have been if a free importation had always been allowed. And if such a family also requires four pounds of salt beef and pork daily; as these articles are, by the same cause, raised more than

\* The clamour against the law of 1773, which allowed importation of wheat, when the price was forty-eight shillings, and Mr Dirom's complaint, page 87, that it was clandestinely imported, when the price was much below forty shillings, are clear proofs that these people believed that plenty of wheat could be imported below forty shillings, if allowed.

three-pence a pound, the expence of such a family is raised one shilling a day, or L. 18. 4s. annually, in these two articles ; so that the high duties upon the importation of food, have gradually raised the expence of such a family in wheat and salt meat, L 42. 4s. annually, and the expence of larger families must be greater in proportion.

It is obvious, that few labourers who have families can obtain such wages as to enable them to purchase a sufficiency of wheaten bread and salt meat, even when the prices are much lower than at present ; they must therefore live on short allowance, and on cheaper kinds of bread ; and as these are also raised in price, nearly as much as wheaten, in proportion to the nourishment they afford, they cannot obtain near a sufficiency even of these ; and it is also obvious, that the misery of these people must increase with the increase of their families, and that these miseries, which millions are suffering, are the necessary consequences of the high duties on the importation of food ; whereas it cannot be pretended, that the high duties, upon importing manufactures, have raised their price ; on the contrary, it must be admitted, that they are, in general, cheaper in Britain, than in any other country in Europe.



It is evident, therefore, that those positions, upon which Mr Malthus vindicates the corn laws, are fallacious in the extreme.

## SECTION VII.

### *Of the Danger of depending on Foreign Nations for Food.*

Mr Malthus concludes his justly celebrated essay on population as follows:—" All the checks to population which have been observed to prevail in society, in the course of this review of it, are clearly resolveable into moral restraint, vice and misery."

As this conclusion must be admitted to be just, if emigration is included in moral restraint, it necessarily follows, that when the increase of population is greater than the increase of food, notwithstanding the operation of moral restraint and vice, unless a supply is imported, it will then necessarily be checked and brought to a level with the produce of food by misery and deaths. Consequently, it must be cruel to prevent importation, unless it can be shown that the evils which attend it are greater than those which attend a want of food.

As Mr Malthus has not shown this to be the case, it is surprising that he should recommend that check in such unqualified terms, without taking the least notice of the miseries which he knew it must produce. He says, "That we can readily, and with perfect facility, turn ourselves from an importing to an exporting nation, in the article of corn. I would by no means pretend to say, but both theory and the experience of the first half of the last century warrant us in concluding it practicable, and we cannot but allow that it is worth the experiment, as the continuance of our national greatness and commercial prosperity seem absolutely to depend upon it. If we proceed in our present course, let us but for a moment reflect on the probable consequences. There cannot be a doubt that in the course of a few years, we shall draw from America, and the nations bordering on the Baltic, as much as two millions of quarters of wheat, besides other corn, the support of above two millions of people. If, under these circumstances, any commercial discussion or other dispute were to arise with these nations, with what a weight of power they would negotiate. Not the whole British navy could offer a more convincing argument than the simple threat of shutting all their ports." \* It is obvious that

\* The last paragraph but two of this chapter, of bounties on corn.

in this paragraph the author not only keeps the evils which must attend a want of food entirely out of view, and boldly, without the smallest foundation, ascribes to the corn laws the merit of being the cause of the prosperity of the country ; but he also aggravates the danger of a free importation, by representing it to be in the power of the nations, from whom the supply comes, to starve us, unless we make such concessions as they may demand, which is not the case.

The great deficiency of our crops in 1799 and 1800, did not fall entirely upon our own people, but was made up in a considerable degree by importations from other nations. And upon the failure of the crops in France, some years before that, our government was said to use every mean to prevent an importation into that country, without effect, notwithstanding the power of the British navy. It cannot, therefore, be supposed, if there were a free trade in corn, that any nation could prevent Britain from obtaining a supply in the case stated by Mr Malthus, as the wants of this country would, in such a case, be supplied from the markets to which we had access : And as that demand from Britain would raise the price in all these markets, the merchants of these countries would supply their wants, by importing from the country that had prohibited its usual supply



to Britain. By a particular country stopping the usual intercourse, the price of corn in this country might be raised, but the supply to be obtained in a circuitous way would be the same.

This author also says :—" If things had been left to their natural course, there is no reason to think that the commercial part of the society would have increased beyond the surplus produce of the cultivators, but the high profits of commerce, from monopolies, and other peculiar encouragements, have altered this natural course of things, and the body politic, is in an artificial, and in some degree, diseased state, with one of its principal members out of proportion to the rest." \*

This is a very extraordinary sentiment from this author, as it is obvious, upon his own principles, that unless there were unoccupied land for the increasing number of cultivators to cultivate, their surplus produce could only increase in an arithmetical progression, therefore, could not support the increase of manufacturers, which must be, (if they have a sufficiency of food,) in a geometrical progression. Hence, as there is no unoccupied

\* The last paragraph of his chapter—Of the different effects of the agricultural and commercial system.

land in Britain, the whole increase of people, not only of the manufacturers, but also of the cultivators, &c. must go into the class of manufacturers, or become beggars. For as every agricultural scheme, which a proprietor or tenant adopts, is with a view of obtaining some profit to himself, after deducting every expence of labourers and work cattle ; and as labourers are only employed where they execute the work cheaper than it can be done with cattle ; and as no more labourers are employed to execute any work than what are thought absolutely necessary, it is obvious, that however much the manufacturers and cultivators may increase in number, and the increase of the families of the owners of land, and of those who are employed in the learned professions, &c. augment that number, few, if any more of them can obtain employment in agriculture, they must, therefore, if they continue in the country, be manufacturers, <sup>or</sup> become a burden upon their friends, or upon the public as beggars.

We must always bear in mind, when examining this subject, that in every country where the land is private property, no person can exist, unless they have land of their own, or can obtain food from owners of land for labour, or manufactures, or gratuitously, and where the people are unacquainted with the arts of manufacturing, and the

owners of land send quantities of food to foreign countries to purchase manufactures, no more people can exist in the country than the food that remains can support. And even in manufacturing countries, from which no food is exported, when the number of the people who have no land, becomes greater than the spare food of the owners of land can support, the surplus must emigrate or die of hunger, unless they can purchase food from foreign countries, with manufactures, and are allowed to import it.

As these positions are incontrovertible, and as the labourers in the provinces of Ireland and Scotland, in which there are no manufactures, are in a much more miserable state, than the labourers in the manufacturing provinces of these countries, it is surprizing that Mr Malthus should impute the present distress of the labourers to the diffusion of the arts of manufacturing. As it is obvious, that this is occasioned entirely by the people having become more numerous than the food of the country can support, and their being prevented by cruel and imprudent laws, from importing it from foreign countries. If importation had always been free, the under-peopled countries of America would have supplied our increasing number of manufacturers with food, at a moderate price; and as they would have taken manufactures in payment, that



exchange would have served our manufacturers in two ways, by lowering the price of food and raising wages.

It has been said, that as there are considerable tracts of waste land in Britain, susceptible of improvement, and a much greater quantity of cultivated land, susceptible of further improvement, it is improper to allow importation, until this country is all improved ; but as the owners neither improve these lands themselves, nor let them on such terms as to induce the occupiers to do it, it is certainly unjust and cruel to prevent the people who have no land from importing food to support their increasing numbers, because there are such lands in the country, when it must be admitted that their waste state is not imputable to these people. It would certainly be much more just and effectual to oblige the owners to improve them than to starve the poor, under the pretence that raising the price of corn will induce the occupiers to do it ; a pretence that will be shown in the next section to be fallacious in the extreme.

Mr Malthus says that a free importation of food is imprudent, because the increasing population of the countries from whence it is obtained, may ultimately prevent them from having any to spare. That the population of America and Africa, &c,

may become so great as to require their whole produce, is possible: but as that can only take place gradually, and cannot be supposed to be general, for many centuries, if ever; and, as it is obvious, that as the supply lessens, the price of food in this country will rise, and gradually reduce the population to the quantity that can be obtained at the time; and as the land of this country will be more and more enriched by the importation, and produce more; and as improvements in agriculture may be discovered before that period to double or triple the quantity of food, produced at home, and render importation unnecessary; and, more particularly, as the misery attending a scarcity, occasioned by prohibiting importation, is as great as what can be occasioned by a want of food to import; it is most absurd and cruel to starve the poor by preventing an importation of food, when plenty is to be got, because that supply may gradually lessen some centuries hence.

Mr Malthus, when pointing out the advantages of the corn laws, says: “ In the whole compass of human wants, I doubt if there be a more fruitful source of misery, or one more invariably productive of disastrous consequences, than a sudden start of population, from two or three years of plenty, which must necessarily be repressed on the first return of scarcity or even

“ of average crop.”\* This observation is admitted to be just, and that it is of the greatest importance to the welfare of mankind to prevent, as much as possible, a fluctuation in the price of food. But it is obvious, that a free trade must be much more effectual for that purpose, than the wisest laws for regulating exports and imports ; as it is the business and interest of merchants, to obtain accurate information of the prices in every country to which they are allowed to trade, and to buy where it is cheap, to carry to the countries where it is dear ; by that means, serving the cultivators where corn is cheap, and relieving the consumers where it is dear, and bringing the prices as near to a level as possible. And it is also obvious, that the more extensive the trade is to different countries, of different soils, and in different climates, the greater equality may be expected in the annual average produce. It deserves remark, that as America can always export great quantities of food, which will naturally be sent to the dearest market in Europe, if allowed, and as it can be sent to all of them, nearly at the same expence ; a free trade with that country would keep the price of food much more equal in the different countries of Europe, than it can be kept by a free trade among these countries without such

\* Chap.—Of bounties on the exportation of corn.



a supply ; because, in that case, the price in the countries where the crops are bad, must always be as much higher than the price in the countries where a supply is obtained, as to pay the exporting and importing merchants for trouble and the expence of carriage, which are considerable. The corn laws, therefore, not only raise the price of corn, but they make it much more unequal than it would be if the trade were free.

#### S E C T. VIII.

#### *Of the Effects of the Corn Laws upon the Rent and Value of Land.*

The gradual rise of the price of corn, since the middle of the last century, as the people improved in the arts of agriculture and manufactures and accumulated capital, and were by these means enabled to pay higher prices, and its having been for many years so very much dearer in Britain than in any other country, are strong proofs that the corn laws have fully answered the intention of their promoters in raising its price ; but it will also appear, from the following observations, that they have not raised, nor in their nature are calculated to raise, the rent or the value of land ; the ultimate end for which they were enacted.

The exportation and importation of corn and cattle from one part of Britain to another, is perfectly free ; and it must be admitted, that the lands occupied by the inhabitants of every populous town, form, in the strictest sense of the words, an importing country, and that the lands which supply these towns with corn and cattle are exporting countries. According, therefore, to the expected effects of the corn laws, the rents of the land, in the country districts which export corn and cattle, should be higher than in the town districts which import these articles, the prices of which are depressed by the importation. But the fact is the very reverse ; and so far is importation of food from being a cause of lowering rents, as has been supposed, the rents of the lands in every town district, are not only higher than in the neighbouring exporting districts, but they rise in proportion to the increase of the people and greatness of the importation. And these causes invariably produce these effects, not only upon the different districts of the same country, but upon different countries. Holland, for instance, has annually imported, and Poland has annually exported corn for centuries ; yet the land in Holland has not only given a much higher rent, but could be sold for a much greater number of years purchase of the rent, than land in Poland of equal fertility ; as a greater number of years purchase can be obtained for land in pro-

portion as money is plenty, and interest low; and money is always more plentiful and interest lower in manufacturing countries which import, than in countries that export provisions.

The principal part of Britain being occupied for the purpose of raising corn, seems to have prevented its being observed, that though a higher rent can be obtained for land for that purpose, in proportion as the price of corn is high, a higher still might be obtained for it for other purposes. The high rent of land, near all towns, is not owing so much to the high price of corn, as to the demand for land for raising articles which cannot be brought from a distance, and for raising others which cannot be brought from a distance, but at great expence. And it is obvious, that the richer and more numerous the inhabitants are in any district, higher rents will be obtained for these purposes.

The land near populous towns gives high rents, not only on account of the high price of its produce, but also on account of the greatness of that produce. The quantities of ashes, soot, and putrescent manure are so considerable, that all the land is thereby greatly enriched, so that even very poor land is made to produce great crops.



Thus, an importation of food, not only adds to the produce of the country, but also increases that produce. Whereas an exportation of food must have a contrary effect, as it must impoverish the land, by taking away the manure, and tempting the occupiers to exhaust it with crops of corn.

An increase in the number and riches of manufacturers, not only raises the rent and value of the land which they occupy, and in their immediate neighbourhood, but also raises the rents in every part of the country, by increasing the demand for butcher's meat, an article which cannot be imported fresh from foreign countries. Hence it must follow, that the owners of those parts of Britain, which have been always in grass, must have been great sufferers by the corn laws, not only by their lessening the number and impoverishing the people, and by these means lessening the demand for butcher's meat, but also by raising the price of corn, which the owners and occupiers of these lands must purchase for themselves and their servants. And as the same quantity of corn must be given to the work cattle, when dear as when cheap, the expence of improving poor land must increase with the increase of the price of corn. And as such land, after it is improved with lime or marle, ought to be seldom in corn, the profits from the improvement depend much more up-

on the value of grass than the value of corn. So that a high price of corn, not only increases the expence of improving poor land, but by lowering the price of butcher's meat, lessens the profits to be derived from it after it is improved. It must also follow that the parts of the corn farms which are in grass and turnips, must produce less profit in proportion, as wool and butcher's meat are sunk in price by the high price of corn; consequently, as more than two-thirds of these farms, are, upon a medium, constantly in grass and turnip, the additional profit that is made upon the third that is in corn by its high price, will not, in most cases, make up the loss upon the other two-thirds; so that even the owners of corn lands at a distance from towns are not gainers by the corn laws. That this is the case appears more certain when we reflect that notwithstanding the present exorbitant prices of corn (occasioned by the war, and the operation of the corn laws\*), the rent of grass keeps up with the rent of corn land, and therefore would be higher if wool and butcher's meat were higher, which they would certainly be if a free importation of food were allowed, which would occasion a proportional increase in the demand for manufactures to be exported as payment.

\* If the importation of corn had always been free, the quantity imported from America and Africa would now have been so great that the stopping of the supply from the Baltic would have had little effect.

But whatever opinion may be entertained upon this point, there can be no doubt that the rent of corn lands at a distance from manufacturing countries, would have been much higher than they are if there had been large manufacturing towns in their neighbourhood, as their inhabitants would have been customers, not only for the corn at home, and have saved the expence of carriage, but also for butcher's meat, and many other productions which cannot be exported, besides the immense rents and prices obtained for land, for houses, and gardens, and the increase of produce by the increase of manure. And it is obvious, that in that case, the owners and occupiers of land would have been supplied with manufactures at a much cheaper rate than when brought from distant provinces or kingdoms; they would have sold the produce of their land much dearer, and bought manufactures much cheaper, which must have raised the rent and value of the land.

The rent of land can only rise with the demand for its produce by people who can pay for it, and that can only increase with the number and riches of manufacturers, either at home or abroad; and it is obvious, that it is raised much more by manufacturers living upon it than when they live in a foreign country. Hence, as their number and



riches increase with the cheapness of common food, and as the demand for butcher's meat and for other articles of convenience and luxury increases as the price of corn is lower in a manufacturing country, it must follow that the greater the importation of common food is, and the lower its price, the greater is the increase of the number and riches of the people, and of the demand for butcher's meat, and for land, for houses, gardens, and for other articles of convenience and luxury. And accordingly, the rent and value of the land of all towns increase in proportion to that demand.

It was shown in the 5th section of this chapter, that if there had always been plenty of food (which would have been the case if importation had been free, and if colonies had been settled in America and Africa, for the purpose of raising food) the number of people in Britain would, upon common chances, have exceeded sixty millions in the year 1812. But suppose they had only increased to twenty millions, there can be no doubt that the annual produce of the land would now have been much greater, and sold at a much higher price than it has been advanced to by the corn laws. In the latter case, it has been advanced by raising the price of corn and starving the poor; in the former case, it would have been advanced by an

increase of produce \* and by an increase of the demand for butcher's meat and for articles of convenience and luxury by the rich and consequent rise of their price.

The advantage which the owners of land derive from a high price of corn, is also balanced in a great degree by its raising the wages of the people whose service they require, and the price of manufactures, and also by raising the poor rates.

A rise in the price of common food reduces, for a time, the rate of wages, by obliging many to hire themselves who had lived independently when it was cheap, but when the prices continue so high that the wages of labourers cannot procure a necessary quantity of food and clothes for themselves and families; the want of these generate disease and reduce their numbers by deaths, and by many of them becoming beggars; and in proportion to the number that die and become beggars, the competition for work is less, and wages rise, and the demand for food is less, and tends to reduce its price. It seems therefore to follow, that disease and deaths and the practice of begging, occasioned by want,

\* In proportion as the people increase by the importation of food, the quantity of ashes, soot, and putrescent manure, must also increase, and cheapness of corn and high price of butchers meat are great encouragements to improve poor land, and greatly lessens the temptation to exhaust land by over-cropping.

must continue amongst the labourers, until their number is so much reduced, as to raise wages so high, or to reduce the price of food so low, as to enable them to purchase such a quantity of food and cloaths, &c. as are requisite, not only for their own support, but also for the support of such a number of children as are necessary, with the overflowings of the higher classes, to keep up the number of labourers. Hence, it appears, that the owners of land cannot gain very much by raising the price of common food, even supposing that it did not depress the price of the other productions of land, and supposing that the labourers could not emigrate. But as great numbers have emigrated from these kingdoms, and great numbers have been cut off by the war, the wages of agricultural labourers have advanced, nearly in proportion, to the advance in the price of food. The stoppage of the importation of food, has necessarily stopped the demand for manufactures that would have been exported as payment, which has ruined many thousands of manufacturers of particular kinds of goods, by lowering their wages and profit, and raising the price of food, and the supernumerary manufacturers must emigrate or die.

Thus, it appears, that the corn laws, neither have produced, nor can produce, any of the good effects ascribed to them; that they have greatly in-



creased the miseries of the poor, and obstructed, in a very high degree, the increase of the number, the riches, and the power of the nation, and also the increase of produce, and the rise of the rent and value of land.

As the effects of these laws, in raising the price of corn, are obvious and immediate, whereas the effects of the cheapness of corn and salt meat, in increasing the number and riches of the people, and by these means, increasing the produce and raising the rent and value of land, for other purposes than raising corn, though ultimately much greater, are not so obvious, and are much slower in their operations; these circumstances form an apology for the promoters and supporters of these laws, in having been so much mistaken respecting their effects upon the rent and value of land. But there can be no apology for their mean hypocrisy and selfishness, in pretending that their object was to make corn plenty, when their sole intention was to raise its price and the rent of land, though conscious that in proportion as corn is raised in price, the number of the poor and their miseries must increase.

## CHAP. VII.

## OF TAXES, DRAWBACKS AND BOUNTIES.

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SECT. I.*Of the Sources of Revenue and principles of  
Taxation.*

Dr SMITH says, “ whoever derives his revenue  
 “ from a fund that is his own, must draw it from  
 “ his labour, his stock, or his land.” But though  
 this observation be just ; yet as the amount of  
 the revenues from these different sources, varies  
 so much, in proportion to one another, in neigh-  
 bouring nations ; and as the total amount from the  
 three sources is not regulated by the extent or fer-  
 tility of the country, it is of great importance to  
 discover the cause of these differences ; and for  
 that end it is proper to ascertain what articles and  
 circumstances are necessary to the production of  
 each of these revenues.

It is obvious, that no person can produce any article whatever by labour, unless he can obtain land, or some of its productions to work upon; and that stock can produce no article, unless there are labourers to employ it, and land or its productions for them to work upon. Hence, as land produces many articles for the use of man, without the assistance of either labour or stock, it seems to follow, that land is the original source, and necessary to the production of all revenue; and consequently, that in countries where it is private property, the owners, if not restrained by law, have it in their power to prevent those who have no land from producing any revenue, either by their labour or stock, or to live in the country.

In the first section of the fourth chapter, I have endeavoured to show, how improvements in manufactures enrich the people who have no land, and enable many to acquire considerable incomes; and it is obvious, that in proportion as the revenues of individuals of that class encrease beyond what is requisite for procuring them necessaries, they can pay a greater sum for public purposes, so that industry and improvements in manufactures, and accumulation of stock, must increase the public revenue from labour and stock.



But manufacturers can only prosper where their persons and property are free and secure, and where they can obtain land in perpetuity for houses and other conveniencies, and where they can also obtain in exchange for manufactures, a sufficiency of food and other necessary productions of land; and it is obvious, that a country can supply a greater number of people with these articles, in proportion to its extent and fertility, and as more of the land is employed in raising them and is better cultivated.

If the owners of land in Britain were to turn a considerable part of their estates into forests for hunting, and if no food or other necessary productions of land were imported, a corresponding proportion of the people must leave the country or die of hunger, and the revenue, from labour and stock would be diminished in proportion to the decrease in the number of the people; and it is obvious, that in proportion as estates are more extensive, the owners may, with less inconvenience, allow larger tracts of them to lie waste; and their inducements to improve the other parts are weaker.

In such countries as Russia and Poland, where many estates are as extensive as the county of York, and several more than double that extent,

and where the people are slaves to the owners of the land, they have no incitements to industry or to improvements in manufactures, or to accumulate capital, consequently there can be very little revenue from labour or stock ; and as the proprietors keep half of their land as forests for hunting, and as the other half is necessarily very ill cultivated, by such poor dependant cultivators, the crops are bad, and as services are the principal part of the rent, the revenue from land must be very small, in proportion to the extent and natural fertility of the country ; yet it is the only revenue of any consequence in such countries :— Hence the saying of Artaxerxes, recorded by Gibbon, “ that all taxes must, at last, fall upon agriculture,” is not far from the truth, when applied to those nations ; but is erroneous in a very high degree, when applied to taxes upon superfluities, in such a free manufacturing nation as the English, where the revenue from labour and stock is probably more than ten times as much as the revenue from land ; and if a free importation of food had always been allowed, the number of manufacturers in England would have been double, if not triple, of what it is, and the revenue from labour and stock would have increased with the increase of their number. And so far are the taxes on such revenue from falling upon land owners, the rents and value of the land in England would

have increased with the increase of the number and riches of the manufacturers, as shown in the last section of the preceding chapter ; and it cannot be supposed, that these taxes could fall upon the owners of land in the foreign countries from whence the manufacturers obtained their food and the materials of their manufactures.

It deserves remark, that a nation is not only richer, but is also more powerful, in proportion as industry is more general, and as more labour is saved by improvements in the arts, and by the employment of stock. Fewer people being requisite to cultivate the land, and to produce a sufficient quantity of necessary manufactures, a greater number of them are supported by revenues from land and stock, and by manufacturing superfluities, and it is evident, that a great proportion of these latter classes may be employed in war, without lessening the produce of food or necessary manufactures. And when a part of the revenues expended by individuals on superfluities, is, by taxes, transferred to government, it will support the same number of people in the service of government, that it did when they were employed in manufacturing superfluities for individuals.

Accordingly, though the increase of the revenues of Britain, from the different sources of wealth



have been very much obstructed by the present war, and a great part of them mortgaged, yet the cultivation of the land, and the production of necessary manufactures have not been in any degree lessened; though it has continued twenty years, and though a very great proportion of the people have been engaged in the army and navy, and in manufacturing the necessary implements of war. Whereas, in nations where the people who have no land are retainers, or slaves to the owners of the land, and subsist by cultivating small pieces, or are employed in necessary manufactures, it is obvious, that when these people are taken from their land for military purposes, its cultivation is either totally neglected, or executed in a slovenly manner, and the crops are consequently deficient. And by employing the tradesmen to manufacture implements of war, there must be a deficiency in the quantity of necessary manufactures. Hence the misery which has always been the consequence of embodying large armies, and keeping them together, during seed-time and harvest in such countries, even though there should be no invasion by an enemy's army, and the inability of such nations to support an army out of their own country.

As it is evident, that the revenue from land can only increase with the increase of its productions

for the use of man, and with the demand for land for his accommodation; and as the revenue from labour and stock can only increase with the increase of these productions, it must follow, that to increase the number, the riches, and the power of a nation, it is necessary that the legislature enact such laws, and tax such articles in the first place, as shall most effectually increase the productions of land for the use of man, and encourage industry and improvements in the arts and manufactures, and the accumulation and employment of capital.

## SECT. II.

### *Of Taxes that Increase the Number and Riches of a Nation, from internal Sources*

Though it be the interest of a nation that is become more populous than the produce of the country can supply with food and materials of manufactures, to import what are necessary, yet it will be admitted, that it is the interest of every nation, in the first place, to promote the increase of these articles in the country, and to prevent their waste, that they may depend less upon a foreign supply. The following taxes ought, therefore, to be adopted, in the first place, in all populous countries.

A high tax upon land in forests, would double the quantity of food in most of the countries in Europe, and would increase it very much, even in Britain, as there are considerable forests in the highlands of Scotland, and those that belong to the crown in England, are extensive.

The corn laws were said to be enacted for the encouragement of agriculture, but they could only be expected to encourage the occupiers to exhaust the land by over-cropping, and by that means lessen its produce. The most effectual way to increase its produce is to secure to the occupier the whole fruits of his labour, and the enjoyment of his improved possession. It was shown in the third section of the fourth chapter, that occupiers of land upon a feu-right can afford to lay out much more money upon its improvement, in a profitable manner than a tenant, and it is obvious, that they have much stronger inducements to do so.

To encourage the permanent improvement of land, therefore, taxes ought to be laid upon all land not occupied by the owner, or upon a feu-right, and they ought to be so high as to make it the interest of the proprietors to let all their land in feu, which they do not occupy themselves.\*

\* As plenty of food and other necessary productions of land may be obtained from America and Africa, there is less occasion for such a tax, at present, in Britain, if a free importation were allowed. But such a tax is of importance to lessen the dependence of the nation on foreign supply.



In the English colonies in America those who got grants of land were obliged to cultivate a certain proportion of them, in a limited time, or if they did not, the lands might be granted to others. This colonial law is founded upon the same principles as the proposed tax upon land, not let in feu, both of these laws have a direct tendency to increase the productions of land for the use of man.

The tax on licenses for retailing fermented liquors, tends, not only to check the waste of food, but also to preserve the morals of the people; as it must be admitted that the friends of every ale-house and tavern-keeper are induced to frequent these houses, and to encourage others to accompany them, to serve their friends, and this passion must operate more generally in proportion to the number of such houses, and it must also be admitted, that when drunkenness and dissipation can be imputed to friendly motives, these passions may be expected to be much indulged. Hence it would appear to be proper, that the tax on these licenses should be higher in proportion to the number of such houses, within a certain distance, consequently not necessary for the accommodation of the public. When there are two within a mile, each of them to pay one half more for their licenses than is charged in Britain at present;—

when there are three within that distance, each to pay double the present taxes ; when there are four, each to pay three times the present taxes ; and when there are five, each of them to pay four times the present taxes.

High taxes upon spirits and fermented liquors, seem, upon the same principles, to be necessary, and therefore it must be improper to exempt ale brewed in private families from any part of the duty, as it evidently exempts gentlemen and farmers in the country, who have conveniences for brewing, from a proper tax, which the inhabitants of towns must, in general, pay. It seems also improper to impose higher taxes upon spirits that are imported, than upon spirits extracted from grain in the country, as that must diminish the quantity of the food of the country, and it seems to be particularly improper to exempt the people in the highlands of Scotland from a considerable part of the tax upon grain spirits, as that exemption, instead of serving them, increases drunkenness and idleness, by the low price of spirits, and by tempting them to engage in smuggling.

As every horse kept for pleasure consumes, in general, as much food as would maintain a labourer's family, they ought, therefore, to be taxed very high, and there seems to be no reason why they

should not be taxed even higher than ale. Hence as the tax on ale is more than double the price of the barley, from which it is extracted, in years of ordinary plenty, the tax upon pleasure horses ought to be more than double the price of their food, which, at a medium, cannot be less than twenty pounds a year, even when kept in the country. It is, therefore, very extraordinary, that the tax on one pleasure horse is under three pounds a year; and though the tax rises very properly upon each horse, according to the number that is kept by one person, yet it does not rise higher for any number than six pounds for each horse, which is not a third part of the price of their food, and horses that are not used, pay no tax, of which noblemen and gentlemen keep great numbers.

It is obvious, that it would diminish the number of horses, and consequently increase the quantity of food for man, if every horse above four years old, not employed in useful labour, or suckling a foal, were to pay a tax in some such proportion as the following.

The tax even upon one horse kept in the country, (where they are most necessary, and cannot be got for hire) ought not to be below £ 10 annually, £ 20 each for two, £ 30 each for three, and £ 40 each for four, and all above that num-



ber. Horses below twelve hands high, and mules; as they consume little food, to pay half these taxes, and asses to pay no tax. One horse kept in a town, for a person's own use, to pay L 30 annually, two, to pay L 40 each; three, and all above to pay fifty pounds each.

Horses kept for hire, ought not to be taxed by the year, but to pay by the mile, as at present, lest the owners should be tempted to over-work them.

As dogs destroy a great quantity of food, they ought to be taxed four or five times higher than they are at present in Britain, excepting where there is only one dog kept in the country, and no composition ought to be allowed for packs of hounds.

As servants cannot be expected to be so careful of food as the owner, and as they are less careful, in proportion to the greatness of their number, there ought to be a considerable tax upon both men and women servants that live in the family, to increase with their number in all populous countries; and as men servants are much less necessary in families than women, the tax upon them ought to be much higher than upon women.

Hair powder is very properly taxed in Britain, as it is a waste of food, but there ought also to be considerable taxes upon deer parks, upon pleasure grounds, and upon gardens of above one quarter of an acre for private use.

Rooks, not only destroy great quantities of corn, they also destroy great quantities of potatoes, of turnips and clover; it would, therefore, be of importance for increasing the quantity of food for man, if the number of these creatures were materially lessened, and the most effectual way to do that, seems to be, to lay a considerable tax upon rook nests, to be paid by the owner or occupier of the lands on which they are built.\* And there ought also to be a considerable tax upon pigeon houses, according to their size. And as rabbits, hares, and pigeons destroy much food, every person ought to have liberty to kill these and other wild animals upon the land he occupies.

As an exportation of food, in payment of ma-

\* As rooks destroy wire worms, some think that they ought to be protected on that account; but the good they do in that way must be trifling, as the lands where they seldom feed, and even those near houses where they never feed, are as little injured by worms, as those where the greatest number feed.

manufactures, must diminish the number, and impoverish the people, and must also impoverish the land, high taxes ought to be laid upon manufactures imported into populous countries.

In proportion as these taxes and laws increase, the quantity of food, and other necessities, for the support of man, it is obvious, that the prosperity of the nation will depend less upon foreign supplies.

### SECT. III.

*Of Taxes that Impoverish the People and diminish their Number.*

As no person can exist without food, nor in any degree of comfort without cloaths, a house, some furniture, and some fuel, it must follow that taxes upon any of these necessities, or that prevent their production or importation, must, by raising their price, prevent the labourers from obtaining a sufficiency, the want of which must generate disease, and reduce their number; and in proportion to the reduction of the number of labourers, less stock can be employed, and less demand for land and its productions, and the public revenue from land, from labour, and from stock,



must be less. The following taxes, therefore, instead of increasing, must diminish the public revenue.

Tythes are a heavy tax upon agriculture, and obstruct, in a high degree, the improvement of land and the increase of food. But paying a certain proportion of the produce, as rent, is much worse than tythes, as it must have a greater effect in deterring the tenant from expending his money upon improvements, of the profits of which others are to reap the principal share. Dr Buchanan, in his account of the Mysore country, says, “ that  
 “ all the land belongs to the prince, who appoints  
 “ a Zemindar to collect the rents, a clerk to keep  
 “ the accounts, and to measure the land, an officer to give each farmer a proportion of water  
 “ for his land, from the reservoirs, a priest for  
 “ each village, and several other officers, one of  
 “ which is to call out the farmers to their work.  
 “ The corn or rice when threshed, is put into  
 “ heaps, a certain part of which, about a tenth,  
 “ is given to the priest, about as much to the Zemindar, and as much to the clerk, and smaller  
 “ proportions are given to the blacksmith and  
 “ joiner for making and mending utensils for the  
 “ farm, and to other officers employed by the Zemindar, and the remainder is equally divided  
 “ between the prince and the farmer, by the Ze-

“ mindar, or the clerk.” When so very large a share of the produce goes to the prince and his officers, divided and taken by the latter, we cannot be surprised at the tenants being so slothful as to require an officer to call them out to work, or that so great a proportion of that fine country is uncultivated. Such taxes upon cultivators, by obstructing the increase of food, and other necessities, must diminish, in a very high degree, all the sources of revenue.

It was shown in the 174th and 175th pages, that the taxes on importation of corn and salt meat into Britain, by raising their price, have increased the expence of every family that buys their food and uses six quarters of wheat annually above £40, which is the same as if they had paid taxes to government to that amount, if importation had been free; and it was shown, in the last section of the preceding chapter, that the owners of land, who receive an immense addition to the price of their corn in consequence of these taxes, are not gainers, as they lose more by the depression of the price of butcher's meat and other articles. So that these taxes on food, imported, have obstructed, in a very high degree, the increase of the number and riches of the people, and of the revenue, from labour and stock, and have also diminished, though in a lower degree, the revenue from land.

As rice is much used by all classes of people, except the lowest, and as it is a nourishing food, and might be obtained in great quantities, at a low rate, if its cultivation was encouraged in Africa and Guiana, the tax upon that article is certainly very imprudent, as less wheat is necessary, in proportion as more rice is used.

The tax upon molasses is also imprudent, as it is a nourishing food, and improves the taste of several unpalatable articles of the food of the poor. Its importation, therefore, from any country ought to be free of duty, and the tax on raw sugar, ought, for the same reason to be low.\*

Though taxes upon the importation of common food must impoverish the people, and diminish their number, yet the legislature of Britain has been so very anxious to *prevent an importation*, that they have imposed heavy taxes, not only upon the importation of corn, salt meat, rice, and molasses, but also upon butter, cheese, eels, eggs, and even upon puddings, and though improvements of land, which increase its produce, not only increase the revenue from land, but also furnish the means of increasing the revenue from labour and stock,

\* Lump sugar should pay double the tax of raw sugar, single refined, three times that tax, and double refined, four times that tax.



yet there are high duties upon the importation of chalk, lime, and several other articles that are principally used for improving land ; and it is obvious, that in a circumscribed country, the more land that is occupied by trees and plants, which do not contribute to the subsistence of man, less is left for the produce of food, and therefore, as there is less danger in depending upon a foreign supply for timber, for rape-seed and lint-seed oils ; for flax, hemp, horses, asses and mules, than for corn ; taxes upon the importation of any of these articles must be imprudent, as it must induce the owners and occupiers of land to rear them, which must leave less land for the production of food. The bounties and premiums for sowing lint and planting trees are equally imprudent.

In proportion as the price of fuel is high, the labourer must have less of his wages to purchase food and other necessities ; any tax, therefore, on that article must impoverish the labourers, yet in the parts of Britain, in which fuel is dearest, and where they can obtain no coal but by sea carriage, that necessary article is taxed very high, if it is imported. It is obvious that such a tax is not only impolitic, but is also unjust, as it affects only particular parts of the country.

But excepting the taxes upon the importation of food, there are none so injurious and partial as those upon salt, as they not only obstruct the increase of food, but are also necessarily more severe upon the people; in proportion as they subsist more upon fish. The labourers on the coasts of the highlands and islands of Scotland, subsist principally upon herrings and potatoes. Hence, as a labourer, who has a wife and four or five children, uses five or six barrels of herrings annually, if he can obtain them, and as two bushels of Scots salt are necessary to cure one barrel of herring, and as the tax on that salt is six shillings per bushel, a poor labourer who has such a family in these countries, pays three pounds sterling annually, as the tax upon the salt for curing his herring; but besides these heavy burdens upon the poor in these countries, the tax on salt is also very heavy upon the people near the coast, through the whole island, and forms a great obstruction to the business of fishing, and increase of food, and consequently to the increase of the number and riches of the people, and of the public revenue.

The tax on leather must raise the price of shoes, and impoverish the labourers, but it must be admitted, that as leather rose gradually to about three times its former price, while the tax continued the same, the tax could not be the cause of

that rise. That rise has been chiefly occasioned by very high taxes upon the importation of tanned leather, by which means the great increase in the demand for that article, could only be supplied by importing raw hides, and tanning them in this country, where bark, for the purpose, is at an exorbitant price; whereas, if tanned leather was allowed to be imported at the same duties that it pays when manufactured in Britain, it might very probably be imported at the price that is paid for the raw hides, as there is, in general, plenty of bark for tanning, in every country from whence the hides come, and hides increase greatly in weight by that operation. It might then be an object for young men bred to the tanning business to settle in different parts of America and Africa, to carry on their business, and to send their leather to this country.

A repeal of the taxes on the importation and manufacturing of leather, would not only give relief to the poor, but would relieve the public revenue from drawbacks upon exporting goods made of leather.

Taxes upon soap are not only injurious to the poor, in point of expence, but also to their health by obstructing cleanliness.



In former ages, when the labourers were retainers to the owners of land, and subsisted by occupying small pieces, the obliging them to work three days before, and three days after harvest, at the public roads, impaired their income very little, as they were, in general, idle, in these times of the year; but obliging labourers now to pay six days wages for keeping the roads in repair, falls much heavier on that class of people than the taxes upon candles or soap, \* and ought to be repealed.

Taxes upon the materials of building not only raise the rent of the houses of labourers, but obstruct the establishing of manufactures by increasing the expence of necessary buildings. Yet there are very high taxes in Britain upon slates and free-stone, when carried by sea, from one part of the country to another, and there are heavy taxes upon bricks and tyles, which increase the expence of building in every part of the country,

\* The tax on candles was formerly a greater burthen upon the poor than it is now, when lamps are in such general use. Hence, as families use a greater quantity of candles, nearly in proportion to their revenue, and as they are not an article that can be exported with profit to any extent, and as tallow is an article of food, which must rise in price, as more candle are used, they seem to be a proper object of taxation, and moulded candles ought to pay double the tax of those that are dipped.

where proper stones and slates are not to be got; which taxes are evidently partial, unjust, and imprudent, and there is also a very heavy tax upon imported timber for building.

It deserves remark, that as the rents of houses in towns that are increasing in population, are only kept down by people of stock, finding it their interest to build new ones, and as that can only be the case when the rents are so high as to yield a profit upon money, expended in that way, it must follow, that government, by laying taxes upon materials of building not only raises the rent of houses that are afterwards built, but enables the owners of all houses, previously built, to raise their rents.

The taxes upon the different materials of building, have raised the rent of houses in Britain, from ten to twenty per cent., according as more of the materials used are liable to the taxes. Whereas, a tax of five per cent. upon the rent of dwelling-houses, to be paid by the occupiers \* would pro-

\* If the owners of houses are taxed higher in proportion to their rents, than other property, the surplus must fall upon the occupier, in all towns where new houses are necessary to supply the inhabitants; as no person will lay out money on building houses, unless the rent will yield a profit upon the expence of building, besides paying that tax upon the owners of houses.

duce a much greater revenue to government than these taxes. And all houses for agricultural or manufacturing purposes would be exempted. The taxes on tyle, and on slate, when imported, are not only partial, as they affect only particular parts of the country, but they form an inducement for using thatch, which occasions the loss of much stock by fire.

Premiums paid upon insurances, operate directly to increase capital whether they are paid to insure capital that is in danger, or that capital may be paid to a child, or other person, at a particular after period. In the former case, it evidently accumulates capital to replace one that is in risk, when lost, which otherwise would have impoverished the owner, and diminished the capital of the society; and in the other case it forms a capital for children, or some other person, to enable them to begin business, and adds to the capital of the society. Taxes, therefore, upon premiums of insurances, must impoverish the nation, and diminish the sources of revenue; and taxes upon successions, that is, upon stock, conveyed by will, is evidently a direct seizure of capital, to spend it for present purposes. And as capital is a principal source of revenue, government, by such a tax, acts as a spendthrift who sells a part of his estate.



The tax of ten per cent. upon income, must discourage exertions in every line of business, as tythes discourage exertions in agriculture; and it is evidently unjust to tax incomes that are obtained by talents and diligence, as high as those that are obtained without either.

It was shown, near the end of the last chapter, that dearness of food reduces the number of the people, which reduction raises wages, and reduces the price of food, and as taxes upon the necessaries of life, must have the same effect in reducing the number of the people; and as it has been also shown \* that the profits of employers of stock rise with the rise of wages, it must follow, that taxes upon necessaries increase the miseries of the poor, particularly those who have families, and nearly the whole of them are ultimately paid by the owners of land and houses, the lenders of money and annuitants, by lessening the demand for the produce of land, and for houses, and raising the wages of labourers and the price of manufactures. Hence, as the number of servants kept by individuals, and the rent they pay for their houses, is, in general, in proportion to their whole expenditure, it must be much more prudent to raise the taxes upon houses and servants,

\* Page 32.

than to lay any tax either upon necessities or manufactures.

#### S E C T. IV.

##### *Of Drawbacks.*

As taxes upon manufactures, or upon the materials of which they are made, must raise their price, it has been thought reasonable, and necessary for the encouragement of their exportation, that the whole, or a part of these taxes should be paid back upon their exportation; but that is taking it for granted, that an exportation of such goods is beneficial to society, which has not been ascertained.

It has been shown,\* that an exportation of manufactures cannot increase the employment for manufacturers, if manufactures are imported as payment, and consequently, it can be of no material service to the manufacturers of any nation, to export more of their goods than what is necessary to purchase food and other productions of land, that cannot be obtained in their own country, in sufficient quantities. Hence, as the impor-

\* First section of the fifth chapter.

tations of the produce of land into Britain, cannot be supposed to pay for more than a half of the manufactures that are exported, the other half must be paid for with manufactures, either openly or clandestinely imported, more gold and silver having been exported, than what has been imported since the year 1795, when the bank of England stopped paying in gold. It is, therefore, evident, that a great proportion of the goods exported, have no effect in increasing the demand for manufactures. For, as it increases the demand for such goods as are exported, it must diminish the demand in an equal degree for the goods that are imported as payment.

It is, therefore, proper to examine how far it is necessary to export any of the articles that are taxed. As it is obvious, that if a sufficient quantity of the articles that are not taxed, can be exported, to pay for the productions of land that are imported, there could be no claim for any drawbacks upon their exportation, which would remove a strong temptation to nefarious practices, and would greatly increase the revenue of government; Dr Smith says, “ that the defalcation of  
 “ the revenue of customs, occasioned by bounties  
 “ and drawbacks, of which a great part are ob-  
 “ tained fraudulently, is very great. The gross  
 “ produce of the customs in the year which end-



“ ed on the fifth of January, 1755, amounted to  
 “ five millions and sixty eight thousand pounds.  
 “ The bounties which were paid out of this reve-  
 “ nue, though in that year there was no bounty  
 “ upon corn, amounted to 167,800 pounds, and  
 “ the drawbacks which were paid upon debentures  
 “ and certificates to 2,156,800 pounds. Bounties  
 “ and drawbacks together, amounted to 2,324,600  
 “ pounds. In consequence of these additions the  
 “ revenue of the customs, amounted only to  
 “ 2,743,400 pounds, from which, deducting  
 “ 287,900 pounds, for the expence of manage-  
 “ ment in salaries and other incidents, the net re-  
 “ venue of the customs comes out to be 2,455,500  
 “ pounds. The expence of management amounts,  
 “ in this manner, to between five and six per cent.  
 “ upon the gross revenue of the customs, and to  
 “ something more than ten per cent. upon what re-  
 “ mains of that revenue, after deducting what is  
 “ paid away in bounties and drawbacks.” From  
 this statement, it appears that the bounties and  
 drawbacks amounted that year to nearly as much  
 as the clear revenue paid to government.

The reports of the amount of customs, annually  
 given in to the house of commons, do not state  
 the amount of the drawbacks. But there is rea-  
 son to conclude, that as great sums are obtained  
 fraudulently, on that account, in these times, as

in those mentioned by Dr Smith. In the report for the year that ended the fifth of January 1813, it is stated, that the drawbacks on rice exported, exceeded the duties on its importation some hundreds of pounds. Hence as the duty on its importation is six shillings and four-pence the hundred weight, and the drawback on its exportation is three shillings and two-pence. It is obvious, that though none is produced in the country, the merchants have fallen upon a way of exporting considerably more than double the quantity imported, besides supplying the country. It must, therefore, be of great importance to put an end to practices so ruinous to the morals of the people, and to the revenue of government.

If the taxes upon leather, cotton-wool, and printed cottons, were repealed, as none of the articles of woollen or hard ware are taxed, and as the manufacturers in these lines in Britain, have great advantages from the command of coal and waterfalls for machinery, they can afford to sell these goods at a lower rate than the manufacturers of other countries, and it is probable that the exportation of these might be so considerable as to pay for the greatest part of the food and other productions of land that may be imported. But suppose a sufficiency of these could not be exported, if the taxes upon the different necessities of life, men-

tioned in the preceding section, were repealed, many other articles might be exported, with profit, without drawbacks. As the price of the food and other necessities of the labourers and master manufacturers would be so much reduced, that the price of their goods, though lowered, by discontinuing the drawbacks, would purchase more of the necessities and conveniencies of life, than the prices, with the drawbacks, can purchase at present. So that no class of manufacturers would suffer by discontinuing the drawbacks, if these imprudent taxes were also discontinued. Nor would the public revenue suffer by such a change, as saving the immense sums paid as drawbacks, would do much more than compensate for the deficiency occasioned by the repealing of these taxes, and their repeal would gradually increase the number of the people, and consequently the revenue.

Besides the drawbacks that are paid for encouraging the exportation of our own manufactures, drawbacks are paid upon East India and colonial produce, upon wines and foreign spirits, and upon foreign manufactures that had paid duties upon their importation, and the drawbacks on these are, in general, four or five-sixths of the whole duty paid, and the whole duty on tea is drawn back on exportation. Hence, as it is well known that the quantity of the goods that pay such duties on im-



portation is given up as much less than it is, and when they are exported, the quantity is given up much greater than it is, the drawbacks, by these means, nearly balance, and frequently exceed the duty paid on importation, as was the case with rice last year, and leave a great part of such goods to be disposed of in the country, either free of duty, or paying very little ; so far as this trade is carried on in manufactures, not only the public revenue suffers, but our own manufacturers are impoverished by the importation.

These drawbacks are allowed for the encouragement of what is called the carrying trade, that is, to enable our merchants to manage the exchanges of the produce of land and manufactures between foreign nations. But as it opens a door to an extensive nefarious species of smuggling, which must have a great effect in corrupting the morals of the people, besides materially injuring the revenue, it cannot be supposed, that these great evils can be compensated by the advantages resulting from the trade. And that trade may be carried on, although drawbacks are discontinued, as merchants have it in their power to ship goods in any friendly port, and to carry them direct to any other friendly country, where they may be wanted, and if they wish to warehouse such goods, it is certainly much safer to allow them to do that, at particular ports, at a

distance, than to allow them to be stored up in Britain, which furnishes so strong a temptation for smuggling; and Malta, Gibraltar, Jersey, Guernsey, and Heligoland, would be very convenient free ports, for that purpose. Admitting, that allowing goods to be imported and warehoused in Britain, does extend the carrying trade, it cannot be supposed that the benefit derived from that part of it can be in any degree, equal to the injury done to the revenue and to manufacturers.

The duty on French cambrics and lawns, for instance, is six shillings, for each piece of eight yards in length, and not exceeding seven-eighths of a yard in breadth, and four shillings are allowed as drawback upon their exportation. Hence, if one hundred and thirty of such pieces are imported, and only pay duty as one hundred, the whole duty will be thirty pounds, and if the hundred and thirty pieces are exported, and passed at the custom-house for one hundred and fifty, the drawback will amount to thirty pounds, which is the whole duty paid upon importation. And as it is well known, that great quantities of tobacco and other bulky goods, for which drawbacks had been received, have been smuggled into the country, we must suppose that cambrics and other manufactures of little bulk, in proportion to their value, upon which drawbacks have been received,

will be smuggled into the country in much greater quantities. Hence there may be an appearance of large dealing, in what is called the carrying trade, when there is nothing but a species of smuggling. And manufactures thus smuggled, must, in proportion to their quantity, diminish the demand for our own, and impoverish our manufacturers,

The Dutch, by the situation of their country, had the command of the mouths of the Rhine and the Maese, and of the exports from, and imports to the people of the extensive populous countries near these rivers, and all their numerous branches ; they had also a monopoly of spices, and a great share of the trade to both the Indies, and for several ages, after the establishment of their republican government, they managed the principal part of exchanges between the different nations of Europe, by which means, their trade in these various lines was very great, and as their country was small, the revenue from trade was, perhaps, greater than the revenue from land and manufactures, and as the majority of the members of government were merchants, their principal object was to encourage the mercantile trade, and to protect, what they considered, the interests of their own class. For these purposes, when more money was wanted for the use of government, instead of



taxing superfluities, which must have been principally paid by merchants, very improper taxes were imposed upon all common food, used in the country, which raised its price to the labourers. The necessary consequence of which was, to obstruct their increase, and by that means to raise their wages, which raised the price of manufactures executed in the country. And as government, from its mercantile principles, imposed no taxes upon the importation of manufactures, great quantities were imported, which greatly reduced the number of manufacturers.

As the mercantile principles of that government, induced it to allow a free importation of food, if no taxes had been imposed upon what was used in the country, there is every reason to believe, that the number of manufacturers, by importing food and materials of manufactures from the Baltic, Africa and America, which they would have paid by exported manufactures, would have been three or four times greater than it ever has been; and that nation could, in that case, have raised internal revenues upon superfluities, incomparably greater than it has been in their power to raise upon necessities. And it is obvious, that if the people had increased, near to the number supposed, their trade in exporting manufactures, and importing food and materials of manufactures,

would have been greater than their carrying trade has been, without having interfered much with that trade. And the nation would have been more powerful, for defending itself against foreign enemies, in proportion to its increased numbers.

What is called the carrying trade, is, of all others, the most precarious in its continuance, as it is the interest of every nation, that their exchanges with other nations, shall be carried on by their own people, and that laws, such as the British navigation laws, be enacted, for that purpose. But even in countries where government do not interfere, the merchants of the country have so many advantages over foreigners, in procuring better cargoes of goods, both as to quality and cheapness, that they must, unless prevented by oppressive impositions, gradually acquire the export of the produce of their own country. And, accordingly, the carrying trade of the Dutch has been gradually diminishing, and before their subjection to France, was very much reduced. They had not only lost the supplying of Britain and Ireland, with the goods of other countries, but they had also lost a considerable part of the trade of supplying Spain, Portugal, and other nations, with such goods, by merchants in these different countries having engaged in that trade, and by the

merchants of Britain and other countries having taken a share from them.

As commerce produces no article whatever, it is only beneficial to society, by facilitating exchanges of different articles, which must be produced before there can be any commerce, and it can only increase with the increase of the quantity of articles of the produce of land or manufactures. Hence, as obstructing the production of manufactures in the country, not only lessens the number, but impoverishes our own manufacturers, and lessens the internal commerce between manufacturers and their exchanges with foreign nations; to obstruct the production of manufactures, for the purpose of enabling our merchants to manage with more advantage, the exchanges of articles between foreign nations, is giving up a proportion of the manufacturing trade, with its consequent commerce, which are in our own power, for a chance of obtaining a larger share of a less beneficial trade, that depends upon the imprudence and humour of other nations.

Hence, when the effect of the Dutch policy upon their manufactures, and the great uncertainty of the continuance of the carrying trade, are attended to, it seems to be imprudent, in a very high degree, for the legislature of an exten-



sive, populous country, to endanger the interests of their own manufacturers, by allowing an importation of manufactures at low duties, and by allowing drawbacks upon their exportation, for the purpose of encouraging that trade.

From these observations, it appears to be equally for the interest of the nation and the public revenue, that drawbacks of every kind, even on goods exported to Ireland, be discontinued.

#### SECT. V.

##### *Of Bounties.*

The objections stated in the last section against allowing drawbacks, for encouraging the exportation of manufactures, operate with greater force against allowing bounties for that purpose, to which we may add, that a bounty on the exportation of any article, seems to act as a bounty on articles to be imported as payment.

When a quantity of corn is exported from Britain, the payment must be remitted in manufactures, or such goods as are allowed to be imported, which must increase the demand for these goods in the country to which the corn was sent,

and act as a bounty upon their exportation to Britain; and in like manner, if a bounty is given upon the exportation of manufactures, and if food is not allowed to be imported as payment, the remittance must be made in such articles as are in demand; and are allowed to be imported; it therefore, will be principally in manufactures, and will act as a bounty upon their importation, and by that means counteract the intention of giving a bounty upon those that were exported.

If corn is imported into Britain, the importer, to remit payment, can afford to give a higher price for manufactures in Britain, than in any other country, as he saves, by purchasing in Britain, not only the expence of sending the ship to another country for the manufactures, but also the expence of purchasing bills upon that country to pay for them; it seems, therefore, to follow, that a free importation of food into Britain, would not only relieve manufacturers, by reducing its price, but would act as a bounty upon manufactures to be exported as payment.

When manufactures of a foreign country are executed better, or at a lower price than what are manufactured in the country, it seems to be for the interest of the nation, to give a bounty to a few natives, to go abroad to such countries, to

learn the methods of manufacturing them, or such bounties may be given, as shall induce some of the principal manufacturers of such countries to leave their own, and to settle in this country, to instruct our own people ; and giving premiums annually, to those who excel in the different articles of agricultural and manufacturing produce, must be highly beneficial. But excepting such bounties and premiums, which may do much good at little expence, it seems to be very imprudent to give bounties on the exportation of any manufacture, and ruinous to give any on the exportation of the produce of land.

Bounties that increase the produce of food in the country, must be beneficial in proportion to their effect, by furnishing subsistence to a greater number of people, independent of foreign supply. The British legislature allows a considerable bounty upon the exportation of corn, under the fallacious pretence of increasing its production, which it cannot effect. But effectual methods are pointed out in the second section of this chapter, which, instead of requiring bounties, would produce a revenue. Considerable bounties are also allowed upon different kinds of fish, to encourage the fishing trade ; which, so far as they increase the quantity of food, must be of advantage. But the bounties upon the exportation of fish, must



have a contrary effect, and must have been adopted upon fallacious principles, as they must raise the price of fish at home, and lower it abroad. Bounties on boats of a certain size, and occupied by a certain number of fishermen, would encrease the coast fishing very much, as there are many that would engage in that trade, if they could procure boats, and a proper bounty would induce many to build boats to let to fishermen.

## CHAP. VIII.

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### CONCLUSION.

It was observed, in the first section of the second chapter, that in every country where the land is private property, and the people living in a simple state, those who have no land, must, to obtain food, serve owners of land who have food to spare, or they must obtain land from those who have it to spare, for raising food themselves, by giving the owners rent or service, and that the reward of labour and rent of land are regulated by the proportion that the quantity of fertile land, which the *owners wish to let*, and of food *which they wish to exchange for labour*, bears, to the number of people who have no land; consequently, that it is of the greatest importance to the welfare

of these people, that the land be so much divided, that every proprietor shall find it necessary to cultivate his share in the best manner, and have no inducement to give the produce to useless animals, or turn any part of it into forest for hunting. In the second section of that chapter, it is shown, that the laws of entail and primogeniture, in successions to land, are not only ruinous to those who have no land, by enlarging estates, and by that means diminishing subsistence, and the demand for labourers, but also have a powerful tendency to make them slaves.

In the first and second sections of the fourth chapter it is shown, that establishing manufactures in free towns, where property is secure, not only emancipates and enriches the people of these towns, but also emancipates and enriches, though in a much lower degree, the agriculturists in the neighbourhood, and forms a powerful inducement for exertions in agriculture, by which the produce of food has been greatly increased in Britain. But notwithstanding that the establishment of manufactures has produced these effects, yet the large estates, principally formed by the laws of entail and primogeniture, are shown, in the third section of that chapter, to form powerful obstructions to the improvement of the land, and to the full liberation of the cultivators ; and that Britain does



not produce above half the quantity of food it is capable of producing, if the estates were small, and cultivated by the owners, though paying full rent as feus.

It is shown in the first section of the fifth chapter, that since the great owners of land in Europe, were restrained from vying with one another in power, they have vied with one another in the productions of art; and for that purpose the produce of their estates, instead of being given to people living upon them as formerly, has been sent to distant countries, where the works of art were arrived at greater perfection; by which means, labourers in particular countries and provinces, by exporting manufactures, and importing food, have increased in number and riches, and in the arts of manufacturing; while labourers in others, by want of employment, have been impoverished and reduced in numbers, as stated in the third section of the sixth chapter. Whereas, if the land had been much divided, the owners could not, in that case, have afforded to purchase foreign manufactures, and must have put up with such as were manufactured in the neighbourhood, which would have occasioned an increasing demand for labourers and home made manufactures, as the produce of land increased, and the manufacturers would,

in every province, have gradually improved in the arts of manufacturing.

It appears, therefore, to be evident, that the laws of entail and primogeniture, by preventing a division of land, not only obstructs the increase of food and employment for men, but also prevents the diffusion of the arts of manufacturing.

But though the best means be adopted for increasing the quantity of food for man, and preventing its waste, and however much the arts of manufacturing may be diffused, unless the increase of food is equal to the increase of people, it must become scarce and dear, and occasion want and misery. And it seems obvious, that in that case, the people can only be relieved from want by a part of them emigrating, or by purchasing food from foreign countries with manufactures; and as the latter method must be admitted to be preferable, it is the interest of every populous manufacturing nation to encourage, by every proper means, a free trade with under-peopled countries, where there are plenty of fertile lands to cultivate, but few manufacturers to purchase the spare produce of the cultivators, as stated in the 98th page.

As the advantages of such a trade are so obvious, the discovery of America ought to have been

considered, by the populous maritime manufacturing nations of Europe, as a most fortunate event for promoting their welfare, as it opened a view of immense tracts of uncultivated fertile land, from which, by sending out colonies of cultivators, the most ample supplies of food and materials for manufactures, might have been obtained; and by gradually extending cultivation, in the most fertile parts of that country, and by improvements in the methods, there was, and is every probability that a sufficient quantity might be obtained for the increasing numbers of our manufacturers, and of the people in America, for many centuries, forming a most beneficial intercourse among the nations of these continents.

But, unfortunately, the advantages of such a trade not having been sufficiently attended to, the regulations occasioned by erroneous selfish views of the owners and occupiers of land, and the selfishness and ambition of the governments of Europe, have hitherto, not only prevented that discovery from producing these happy effects, they have also made it a source of the greatest misery to the natives of America and Africa, and of the keenest animosities and war among the nations of Europe.



The discovery of that country, however, notwithstanding many imprudent regulations, has, in various ways, become more and more beneficial to the labourers of Britain and Ireland.

The number of common labourers who have emigrated is considerable, which, by lessening the number at home, has increased their wages; and a much greater proportion of the middle ranks also emigrate, and many go to the West Indies with a view of returning with fortunes, and thousands have been sent out in the military line, of whom very few have returned. By these different means, Britain and Ireland have been relieved of a considerable proportion of their supernumerary people, and the situation of those who have no land has been proportionally meliorated. The importation of cotton, hides, and many other materials for manufactures has been great, which must have had a considerable effect in keeping down the prices of those necessities. And the importation of rice, sugar, coffee, cocoa, rum, &c. has been gradually increasing, so that they now form a considerable addition to the annual produce of food in Britain and Ireland. All which, importations and emigrations, meliorate the condition of the labourers.

But the advantages which these nations have derived from the importation of these different

articles from America, are trifling when compared with the advantages which might have been obtained by a free importation of corn and animal food. If a free importation of food had been allowed, from the first discovery of America, as payment for manufactures, to what an immense extent must that trade have now arrived, which would have furnished food and employment for increasing numbers of manufacturers, and would have formed an increasing demand for capital, and for people in all the higher lines of business, by which means the people in Britain and Ireland might have been more than double the number of what they are at present, the lowest ranks living in fulness, as it is probable that the price of wheat would seldom have exceeded forty shillings a quarter; nor salt beef or pork, three pence a pound, as formerly observed.

It is admitted, that when America was discovered, the land in Britain and Ireland had been long monopolised by a few people, and consequently the arts of manufacturing were not much improved or diffused; that the finer kinds were, in general, imported to supply the great land owners; but as the Americans required only the ordinary kinds, which were, in general, manufactured nearly as well in every parish as in any other country at that time; a free trade to America, therefore,

would have increased the number of manufacturers in the different country towns, who would have gradually improved in the arts of manufacturing. And these effects would have been much greater, if no laws enforcing apprenticeships had been enacted; and if Henry the VII. instead of enforcing the ruinous laws against retainers, had annulled the laws of entail and primogeniture, which would have not only answered his purpose of reducing the power of the barons much more effectually, but would also have obliged the owners of land to do justice to their younger children, and, by dividing estates, would have greatly increased the demand for cultivators and home-made manufactures.

As the Americans, if allowed a free trade, would have had a certain market for the produce of their land, with the price of which they could have purchased such manufactures as they desired, it would then have been their interest to have applied themselves chiefly to agriculture, to clear the land of wood, and to increase the number of animals which are proper to be slaughtered for exportation. The increase of these would have enriched their land, and made it produce great crops of corn, and encouraged cultivation.



As agriculture would, in that case, have been much more profitable in that country than it has been, no person would have thought of employing capital in manufactures, while there were any new lands, tolerably fertile, to cultivate ; and few Americans would have gone into the sea-faring line. Hence the shipping of Britain and Ireland would have been incomparably greater than it is at present, as the greatest part of the food and materials for manufactures for the additional number of manufacturers, must have been imported in the ships of these nations.

Thus, it appears, that emigration to under-peopled countries, yields the same relief to an over-populous nation, and is equally necessary in modern as in ancient times ; and that manufacturing nations may now derive a very great additional advantage by purchasing food with manufactures from the colonists, for supplying their own increasing population, and by that means prevent the necessity of a continual recourse to emigration as the people increase in number.

It is obvious, that if every kind of food were now allowed to be imported free of duty, into Britain and Ireland, these beneficial effects would gradually follow in all the manufacturing provinces, in proportion as the Americans acquire

confidence in the new regulation, and as new colonies increase in that country and in Africa.

But however plentiful food and materials of manufactures may be in these or any other country, a liberty to import them cannot relieve the labourers in the provinces in which no manufactures are established. The labourers in these provinces, from a want of capital, and other advantages, are unable to serve the proprietors of land, or one another, with several kinds of manufactures so cheap as they can be imported from other provinces and countries, although they are willing to work for very low wages. But if they cannot stand a competition in their own country with foreign manufacturers, whose goods are there loaded with duties, carriage, and merchants profits, it cannot be expected that they can have any chance in a competition in a foreign market, nor are there any merchants to export their goods.

As this is the situation of the labourers in the highlands of Scotland, they seem to have no way of relieving themselves but by emigrating to America, or to the manufacturing provinces of their own country. But the first method is, by a late cruel law, rendered unattainable by the poor, and even the latter is attended with greater difficulties than appear at first view.

It cannot be expected that a young man, and far less a young woman, can venture to travel two or three hundred miles in search of employment, until they are sixteen or eighteen years of age; they must, therefore, put up with the miserable encouragement they can obtain at home, and continue a burden upon their parents while under that age; and a person who has not been accustomed to practise what, in a manufacturing society, is called common labour, until such an advanced period of life, must begin very awkwardly. This circumstance, with the peculiarities of their dress and language, makes them the butt of the labourers in the manufacturing provinces. The ridicule to which they are, on these accounts subjected, is so severe, that rather than submit to it, thousands who come south in companies, to assist at harvest work, return to their native place and live in the most abject poverty; and it seems to be owing to the fear of this ridicule, that the young men so seldom go into the navy, or even into the army, except in whole regiments.

These seem to be some of the causes of the extreme poverty of the labourers, in the highlands and islands of Scotland.

Annuling the cruel and selfish law, which the owners of land have obtained, to obstruct emigra-



tion to America, would afford these miserable people some relief. But, as there is very little employment for labourers in that country in agriculture, and less in manufactures, the evil must recur with the increase of people. The only way to relieve them effectually seems to be, to establish manufactures in every part of the country, that they may have articles of value to give for food and other necessaries.

But manufactures cannot be advantageously established, in any country, unless the manufacturers can obtain land in perpetuity, in convenient situations for houses and gardens, and to maintain what cows and horses may be necessary.

It has been observed in the second chapter, that when a large tract of country belongs to one proprietor, his power over the occupiers of the land is necessarily very great; and as this is generally the case in the highlands and islands of Scotland, the proprietors in these countries value themselves as much upon their power as upon the greatness of their rental; and as they know that feuing out a part of their land to merchants and master-manufacturers, to erect buildings, &c. would form an independent interest upon their estates and lessen their power, no price will tempt them to part with their land for these purposes.

Whereas, in a country in which the land is much divided, as the proprietors have very little power over the occupiers, a person who wishes to set up a manufactory can seldom be at a loss to find lands to purchase for that purpose, and can seldom be in the mercy of any individual, for water-falls for machinery, for free-stone and lime-stone quarries, &c. But nothing of that kind can take place in a country where every person is in the power of a great proprietor and his minions, to whom they must cringe in the most servile manner, or leave the neighbourhood.

It seems to be owing to these causes, that manufactures have only been extended in free towns, or in countries in which there is a considerable division of land, and seldom or never upon an extensive estate, which is another proof of the ruinous effects of the laws of entail and primogeniture.

As the right to considerable quantities of land in perpetuity, at a fixed rent, which was granted to the boroughs, with a right to choose their own magistrates, though granted for different purposes, has gradually reared up manufactures and commerce in different parts of England and Scotland; and as the inhabitants of the towns in which manufactures have arrived at the greatest perfection

in these countries, were, previous to these grants, as ignorant of these arts as the people in the highlands are at present; there is no reason to doubt, that if towns were established in that country, in proper situations, with a sufficient tract of land annexed to each in perpetuity, with power to the inhabitants to choose their own magistrates, these people would gradually improve in the arts of manufacturing, and in habits of industry, by which they would be enabled, not only to supply themselves with good clothes, houses, and other conveniences, but would also be enabled to send manufactures to America, to purchase those kinds of food and materials for manufactures, which are not to be got in the country.

The method adopted in different parts of the highlands, of giving long leases of small pieces of land for a house and garden, does not seem to be calculated for establishing manufactures, as these people still depend upon the owner of the surrounding land, for what they may need, either for cows, horses, or for erecting machinery, &c. No man of talents and enterprise, and possessing sufficient capital, can be expected to begin a manufactory under so many disadvantages and humiliating circumstances.



Considering the very slow progress that manufactures made for several centuries in England, notwithstanding the great influx of expert manufacturers, who had fled from the persecutions of Philip the Second, and afterwards from those of Lewis the Fourteenth; and notwithstanding that high taxes were imposed upon several manufactures when imported; and as the people in the manufacturing towns in the south, by their experience in manufactures and commerce, and by their great capitals, have so many advantages over any person who might be willing to establish a manufactory in the highlands, it seems necessary, for promoting that end, to allow a bounty of so much a head, for every manufacturer employed, with a free importation of materials for manufactures and building.

Perhaps the bounties should only be given to people who settle in a town, the inhabitants of which have obtained, in perpetuity, a considerable quantity of arable land, with power to choose their own magistrates; in which case the bounty ought to be considerable, and to continue a number of years certain, to induce men of capital and enterprise to settle in that country. It seems proper to remark, that as people and stock increase in the towns which may be established on the coast, a greater number will be employed in

fishing, (especially if proper bounties on boats and ships are given;) not only on account of a greater demand for fish for the use of the inhabitants, but also on account of an increasing demand for fish by people of capital, for sale in other parts of the country, which will not only increase the demand for fishermen, but will make their profits much more certain and equal than they can be where they depend entirely upon the demand by the people in the neighbourhood, for their own use.

It is shown in pages 91 and 92, that the labourers of Ireland and Scotland, are impoverished by the importation of manufactures from England, for which food is exported in payment. And in page 96 it is shown, that when particular kinds of goods are only manufactured in particular provinces, a change of fashion occasions much misery. To lessen that misery, it seems to be necessary to tax all manufactures, imported into any of these kingdoms, from any of the others. Such taxes would have a great effect in establishing the different kinds of manufactures in all the three kingdoms. As manufacturers increase in Scotland and Ireland, fewer cattle will be sent to England from these countries, and a part of the corn land in England will be turned to grass, to supply the deficiency of cattle. But as England can obtain

plenty of corn from America and Africa, it is obvious that the condition of the labourers in Ireland and Scotland would be much meliorated by these taxes, without injuring the labourers of England; and the land in England would be enriched by more of it being in grass.

If such free towns as have been proposed, were established in Ireland, where necessary, and in the highlands and islands of Scotland, the people, even in the latter country, would in time, as they improved in the arts of manufacturing, become as opulent as their brethren in the present manufacturing counties, where the land is much more fertile; as it can have no effect upon the opulence of a society of manufacturers, whether they purchase food and the materials of their manufactures in their neighbourhood, or at three or four thousand miles distance, providing they are equally good and cheap.

As the land in Ireland is capable of great improvement, it would in general, rise to above six or eight times its present value; and even the land in the highlands of Scotland, though the greatest part of it is unimproveable, would rise at a medium to two or three times its present value, by the demand for houses and gardens, by improvements, and by a rise in the price of cattle,



butter and cheese. And as the value of the land rose, the public revenue would rise in a much higher proportion, because all the land pays some rent at present, whereas the people, in these countries are so poor that they pay no taxes.

It seems necessary for meliorating the condition of the labourers, to annul all the laws enforcing apprenticeships which were so ruinous to the poor in England, when retainers were prohibited, and has always been a great obstruction to people of talents of that class rising in the world, and consequently to the improvement and the diffusion of the knowledge of the arts of manufacturing; as it is obvious, that prohibiting men from exercising any trade, to which they have not served an apprenticeship of a number of years, must prevent the poor from getting their children instructed in the arts of manufacturing. Such laws, therefore, are cruel, unjust, and imprudent, as it is for the interest of the society that every person should have liberty to work at any trade, and in any town that he may judge most for his interest. It should be left to the employers to judge of the abilities of tradesmen. The trial of abilities by corporations is only a form, and of no use, as the greatest dunces, if they have served an apprenticeship, are, by them, passed as masters of their profession.

As a considerable supply of food is much wanted in Britain at present, and as a greater will be necessary as the people increase in number ; every proper mean should be exerted to obtain a free trade with the different provinces of South America and Africa, and to encourage them to cultivate rice, that our dependence on particular countries may be less.

It is shown in the last section of the fourth chapter, that by enacting proper laws for encouraging agriculture, and establishing manufactures, &c. such a country as Poland, may be made to support (without any commerce with foreign nations) six or eight times more people in affluence, than there are in it at present, though paying fifty times the sum for public purposes, that the people of that country are able to pay in the most peaceable times, under their present laws. But it seems necessary to remark, that as the people who have no land can only purchase food with their personal services or manufactures, to prohibit any kind of service by which a great proportion of the people are supported, and who cannot obtain employment in any other way, must occasion as great misery, as we have observed in the third section of the sixth chapter, was produced in England by the laws against retainers. And it is probable, that the same miserable consequences would follow a

law in Russia or Poland, to oblige the owners of land to liberate their slaves.

In these countries, the people living upon estates, are the property of the owners, whose power and consequence increase with their number, and who, on that account, are induced to provide for them, by letting them small pieces of land. But if slavery were prohibited, the people being no longer the property of the owners of the land, they would have no inducement to provide them with subsistence, but would either turn their land to forests for hunting, or let it in large farms to the highest bidder, and with the rents, or produce, purchase manufactures from foreign countries; and as the farmers would employ no more people than they thought necessary, a great proportion of those who had subsisted on small pieces of land, would be rendered destitute, and could only subsist by begging or stealing.

It appears, therefore, probable, that the most effectual way to meliorate the condition of these nations, without reducing the occupiers of land to beggary, is to continue the laws respecting the slavery of these people, but to annul the laws of entail and primogeniture; and to lay very high taxes upon land in forest, or not let in feu, and



upon all imported manufactures\*. In which case, the high tax on land in forest, or not let in feu, would induce the owners to let their land in feu, which would liberate their slaves, who would obtain good wages from the feuers, for assisting in improving their land, and supplying them with houses, furniture, clothes, &c. And if all other necessary laws were enacted for encouraging improvements in agriculture and manufactures, these nations would increase rapidly, in number, in riches, and in power.

From the preceding observations, which are fully supported by experience, it is evident, that insecurity of persons and property, the laws of entail, primogeniture † and tythes, land lying waste or supporting useless animals, or producing little for the use of man, an exportation of food and other necessary productions of land and restraints upon their importation, obstructions to the improvement and diffusion of the arts of manufacturing,

\* It would be imprudent to prohibit importation of manufactures, as that would weaken the motive for exertions in agriculture, and for improvements in manufactures.

† Lord Lauderdale, in the 345th page of his Inquiry into the Nature of Public Wealth, says, “ In general, however, it may be observed, that great inequality of fortune, by impoverishing the lower orders, has every where been the principal impediment to the increase of public wealth.”

an importation of manufactures, and taxes that are oppressive in kind or degree, are the principal causes of the poverty and dependence of the people who have no land in populous countries, and they are also the causes of lowness of the rents, the number of the people, and the power of the nation. And it is also evident, that security of persons and property, land being much divided and productive of the necessities of life, few useless animals, a diffusion of the knowledge of the arts of manufacturing, an accumulation of capital, an importation of food and materials of manufactures, and high duties on manufactures imported, are the principal causes of the melioration of the condition of the people who have no land in such countries ; and they also, in the same proportion, raise the rent and value of land, and increase the number, the riches, and the power of the nation.

THE END.





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# APPENDIX.

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## R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL,

&c. &c.

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# APPENDIX.

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## R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL

ON

## P R E F A C E

### TO THE FIRST EDITION.

IN order to understand the better the following representation on the corn trade and corn laws of this country, it is proper to premise, that in a former representation to his Majesty, presented about the middle of last December, it was shewn, that the price of wheat, taken on an average from the several markets of England, was, at that time, fifty-two shillings per quarter—That the price of wheat, as taken from the market of Amsterdam, which is a free market for corn, and affords, therefore, the best criterion of the medium price of Europe, was, by the lowest estimation, ten shillings higher per quarter—That the prices of corn in other foreign countries, were much higher than in ordinary years—That the old stock of wheat was nearly exhausted in most parts, by the demands of the foregoing year—That bounties were given by the municipality of Paris, on wheat brought into the said city; and that bounties were



paid, as well by the government of France, as by the municipalities of many of the great towns situated upon the coast, on wheat imported therein—That in Spain, all duties on corn imported, were taken off, and that bounties were given on wheat and Indian corn imported into that kingdom—That the export of wheat had been prohibited from several of the northern countries, from whence great quantities of that article are usually drawn, for the supply of the southern countries of Europe—That, in expectation of a scarcity, many governments had formed magazines for the sustenance of their subjects; and that contracts had been made with merchants of England, for the delivery of American wheat at sixty-two and sixty-five shillings per quarter, and for the delivery of American flour at sixty shillings per sack, on its arrival in the Channel.

It was also shewn, that from a failure in the execution of an act passed in the last session of parliament, there was, at that time, no law in force, sufficient to prevent the exportation of corn, whatever the price thereof might be, or to permit the importation upon low duties, if it should be found necessary.

From a due consideration of all these circumstances, the privy council then advised his Ma-

Majesty to issue an order in council for preventing the exportation, and allowing the importation of several sorts of corn, until the sense of parliament could be taken on this subject, in order to insure to his Majesty's subjects a continuance of the advantage they then enjoyed, of being supplied with corn at a much cheaper rate than it could be obtained in most of the neighbouring countries, and thereby to execute and fulfil what the privy council conceived to be the real intentions of the legislature, for the benefit of the people of this kingdom.

As soon as the parliament met, they shewed their approbation of this measure, by passing a law for preventing the exportation, and allowing the importation of corn, in the manner directed by the before-mentioned order in council, till the 29th of September next.

# R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

REPRESENTATION, &c.

At the COUNCIL CHAMBER, WHITEHALL, the  
8th of March, 1790.

By the Right Honourable the Lords of the  
(L.S.) Committee of Privy Council, appointed  
for the consideration of all matters relating to Trade and Foreign Plantations.

To the KING's Most Excellent MAJESTY.

*May it please your Majesty,*

THE Committee of your Majesty's most honourable privy council, appointed for the consideration of all matters relating to trade and foreign



plantations, humbly offered to your Majesty in a former representation, their advice on such measures, as, in their judgment, were necessary, in order to apply an immediate remedy to the evils likely to arise from the difficulties which had occurred in the execution of the laws of this kingdom, made for regulating the exportation and importation of corn, and to preserve your Majesty's subjects from being exposed to that distress for want of this indispensable article of subsistence, which has of late been severely felt in several neighbouring countries; but the committee having in their investigation of this subject been led to consider the state of the corn laws, and the trade of corn in general, and finding that some further provisions are wanting to amend and improve the said laws, they presume to lay this second representation before your Majesty, and therein to submit to your Majesty's consideration, their sentiments on such amendments and alterations in the subsisting laws, as appear to them to be expedient.

The committee thought this subject the more deserving their attention, as they find, by an account \* laid before them, of the quantity of corn imported and exported, during the last eighteen years, that this kingdom, which, in former times used to produce more corn than was necessary for the consumption of its inhabitants, has of late years been under the necessity of depending on the produce of foreign countries for a part of its supply.

\* Vide Appendix, No. I.

Barley is the only article, of which this country produces more, at present, than it consumes. We had formerly a large and profitable trade in the export of corn;—upon an average of nineteen years, from 1746 to 1765, the corn exported from this country is supposed to have produced a net profit of not less than £651,000 per annum; but in the eighteen years, from 1770, to 1788\*, by setting the value of the corn imported against that of the corn exported, and deducting the amount of the duties received thereon, from the bounties paid during the same period, it will appear, that this country, has, upon an average, sustained a loss in this trade, of £291,000 per annum, which sum it has annually paid to foreign nations, for the supply of its inhabitants.

The following table will shew the quantity of each sort of corn exported annually, from England, upon an average of nineteen years, from 1746 to 1765, inclusive: and also the quantity of each sort of corn exported annually, from England and Scotland, upon an average of eighteen years, from 1770 to 1788, inclusive; with the bounty in each period paid thereon.

\* Vide Appendix, No. I.

Vide Appendix, No. 2.	19 years average, from 1746 to 1765, inclusive, from England *.	18 years average, from 1770 to 1788 †, inclusive, from England & Scotland.
	Quarters.	Quarters.
Wheat and wheatmeal...	359,810	108,247
Barley and malt.....	306,974	99,458
Oats and oatmeal.....	20,702	25,802
Rye.....	47,677	6,041
Annual bounty paid thereon	L. 138,677 3 7 $\frac{1}{4}$	L. 32,968 6 4 $\frac{3}{4}$
Bounty paid on corn exported from Great Britain in 1788 .....	} L. 45,182 12 3 $\frac{1}{4}$	

*Note.* \* The accounts in Scotland of imports and exports were not kept by the Commissioners of the Customs there before the year 1755, in such a manner as to enable the committee to obtain an accurate account of the corn imported and exported to and from that part of the united kingdom during the first of these periods.

*Note.* † An account of the quantity of the several sorts of corn exported and imported from and to Great Britain in the year ending the 5th January 1790, has not yet been obtained by the committee, as the accounts from Scotland have not been hitherto transmitted.—But the bounty on corn exported from England only, in the course of this year, amounted to L.76,551 16s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. which is considerably more than double the bounty paid on all corn exported from England and Scotland on an average of the eighteen preceding years, and proves how great a quantity of corn during the course of last year was carried out of the kingdom, before the prices of the several sorts exceeded the prices at or below which export is by law permitted.



The following table will shew the quantity of each sort of corn imported annually into England, upon an average of nineteen years, from 1746 to 1765, inclusive; and also, the quantity of each sort of corn imported annually into England and Scotland, upon an average of eighteen years, from 1770 to 1788, inclusive.

Vide Appendix, No. 3.	19 years average, from 1746 to 1765, inclusive, into England.		18 years average, from 1770 to 1788, inclusive, into England and Scotland.
	Quarters.		Quarters.
Wheat* .....	12,654	Wheat and flour...	150,905
Barley.....	1,500	Barley and malt...	48,048
Oats and oatmeal...	30,449	Oats and oatmeal..	291,405
Rye.....	502	Rye.....	15,577
Beans and pease....	None.	Beans and pease...	31,683
Annual duties } paid thereon. }	L. 1,569 8 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	Annual duties } paid thereon. }	L. 7,620 8 3 $\frac{1}{4}$

The committee hope, that a change so extraordinary in a concern of so much importance, is only to be imputed to an increased population;

*Note to the present edition.* \* No wheat-flour, or malt, were imported into England in the nineteen years from 1746 to 1765, and in several of these years there was no importation into England of several of the before-mentioned sorts of grain.

In the first edition there was inserted in this place an account of the corn exported and imported from and to Ireland for ten years, ending the 25th March 1789; but as this account throws no light on the question, in its present state, it is here omitted. For the same reason are omitted in the Appendix, two accounts relating to the trade of corn in Ireland.

to the numbers of horses and other cattle, which we now breed and maintain more than formerly; and to that opulence which has generally diffused itself amongst all ranks of men, from the extension of our trade and manufactures, and which has occasioned an increased consumption of all the necessaries of life;—for there can be no reason to suppose either that the agriculture of the country has of late declined, or that, for so long a continuance of years, the seasons can have been uniformly unfavourable.

The committee are further impressed with the importance of this subject, and are the more induced to think that it requires immediate attention, as from accounts they have received of the produce and consumption of corn in most European countries, they are inclined to believe, that in ordinary years the produce of corn in Europe is not more than equal to the consumption of its inhabitants; and that whenever the crops fail in any degree, the deficiency can only be supplied from the harvest of America.

The lords of the committee are of opinion, that the principles which are best adapted for the conduct and regulation of other trades, cannot in every respect be applied to this of corn: other trades in general produce only the comforts and conveniencies of life;—this has for its object an article that is indispensably necessary for subsistence: If they at any time decline, some individuals may be affected in their fortunes, and the public can only suffer a temporary loss and inconvenience;—but a mistaken speculation in the trade of corn may produce dearth—the consequence of which will always be general distress,

and sometimes popular commotions: so that in the management of this trade, government ought ever to have in view, not only the prosperity of the trade itself, and the interests of those concerned in it, but the subsistence of the people.

The best market for corn in every country is the home market; and the circulation of it within every kingdom ought to be free, so that the surplus of one part may supply the deficiencies of the other, and that the price throughout the whole country may be brought as near as possible to a level.

To facilitate the circulation of corn, this kingdom enjoys peculiar advantages, which arise from its situation as an island, from the number of its canals, and the excellence of its roads; and by these means the populous and manufacturing counties in some parts of the island can draw the necessary supplies from other parts, which are less populous, but more productive of corn.

In other countries magazines of corn are formed by their respective governments, or by the principal magistrates of great cities, as a resource in times of scarcity. This country has no such institution—The stores of corn are here deposited in the barns and stacks of wealthy farmers, and in the magazines of merchants and dealers in corn, who ought to be by no means restrained, but rather encouraged in laying up stores of this nature, as, after a deficient crop, they are thereby enabled to divide the inconvenience arising from it as equally as possible through every part of the year; and by checking improvident consumption in the beginning of scarcity, prevent a famine, which might otherwise happen before the next harvest.



The inland trade of corn, therefore, ought to be perfectly free.—This freedom can never be abused—To suppose that there can be a monopoly of so bulky and perishable a commodity dispersed through so many hands over every part of the country, is an idle and vain apprehension. The ancient laws of this kingdom, which by a false policy restrained the inland trade of corn, have in general been repealed. The 15th Cha. II. ch. 7. which does not permit the buying corn to sell again, and the laying it up in granaries, except when the several sorts of corn are below certain prices therein mentioned, is the only law of this description which will now be found in our statute book, and ought certainly not to remain there any longer.

But to extend the freedom of this trade to an unrestrained export of corn to foreign countries, would, in the opinion of the committee, be productive of the greatest evils; such export might, in a year of general scarcity, exhaust the stock of any kingdom, and deprive its inhabitants of what is necessary for their subsistence, by sending it for the supply of other nations. There is hardly a country in Europe, the government of which, in the course of last year, did not find it necessary to interpose either to retain its own stock wholly for the consumption of its inhabitants, or at least to prevent an unlimited exportation; and, it is singular to observe, what industry and artifice have been employed by the merchants, and even by the ministers of many countries, to break through these restraints, and to draw supplies from their neighbours. The greatest advocates for a free trade in corn with foreign countries, have always cited the

practice of Hamburg, Holland, and particularly of the town of Amsterdam, being free markets for corn, as a proof that no inconvenience would arise to the inhabitants of a country, by allowing at all times perfect liberty in the import and export of corn: The senate of Hamburg, sensible of the imperfection of such a system, have always kept a magazine well stored with every sort of it, to provide for the consumption of their own inhabitants, in cases of emergency: and, in the last year, many towns of Holland thought it necessary to prohibit the export of corn from their own precinct and jurisdiction to other towns within the same province; and the free circulation of it was thereby prevented even in their own country; and the magistrates of Amsterdam, which is the greatest corn market of Europe, though they kept their port open for the importation and exportation of corn, yet, being fearful that the prices would rise so high as to occasion distress to its inhabitants, collected and laid up in magazines, at the public expence, great quantities of corn, and sold it to the people at reduced prices. And, during the last autumn, if the laws of this country had not restrained the export of corn, and your Majesty had not providently interposed to carry the intention of the legislature, in this respect, into perfect execution, your Majesty's people would have been deprived of the advantage they now enjoy, of purchasing this necessary article of subsistence at a much cheaper rate than those of any neighbouring nation.

It appears, therefore, that the principles on which our corn laws are founded are in general wise; the two objects they have in view are, first to secure a

reasonable price at all times to the farmer, and in the next place to prevent that price being at any time so high as to distress the poor and the manufacturer. With a view to the first of these objects, export is allowed, and even encouraged by a bounty, till the price of wheat arrives at 44s. per quarter; and the import of foreign wheat into this country is restrained by a high duty, till the price of wheat in the home market arrives at 48s. The same policy is observed with respect to other articles of corn. It is a true observation, that no market will be plentifully supplied with corn, unless some liberty is given of disposing to profit of the surplus, for which there may be no demand; without this liberty the farmer would endeavour so to contrive, as to produce no more corn than could be sold in the home market at a reasonable profit, and his speculations would extend no further; the consequence would be, that he would frequently produce less than the home market would demand, and scarcity must sometimes ensue; for it has been found by experience, that a very small deficiency of crop will raise the price in a very high degree.

It is right, therefore, to allow the export of corn, whenever it is sold under a certain price;—it is not necessary for the committee to offer any thing in justification of that policy, which commenced at the revolution, of encouraging by bounty this exportation, and which the legislature has thought fit to continue to the present time. Whatever doubts may be entertained by some, of the wisdom of this measure, it cannot surely be thought prudent to alter it at present; for it is a certain fact, that the agriculture of this country has pro-



gressively increased and flourished from the time when this bounty was first granted; though it is true, that other causes have been assigned for this improvement.—This bounty may be considered as a compensation made to the farmer for the restraints imposed on his trade, in order to ensure subsistence to the people: and it may well be doubted, whether the exportation which is necessary to encourage tillage in a degree sufficient for the home supply (as before stated) would take place if this bounty should be withheld.—In all years, and particularly, in those of reasonable plenty, the price of corn is lower in the countries bordering on the Baltic, and in America, than it is in Great Britain.—In the north of Europe corn can be more cheaply raised, because the value of land is less, and the price of labour is lower.—In America, the value of land is greatly less, and from the extent of their farms, they are able to resort to new lands, or to substitute fallows in the place of manure, and can therefore raise corn without this additional expence; and these circumstances more than compensate the higher price of labour in that country.—Without the aid therefore of the bounty, the merchants of the countries before mentioned, would be able to under-sell our corn factors in foreign countries; and, in consequence thereof, the surplus corn of this kingdom would never find a vent, except in times of general scarcity on the Continent (as of late has been the case) and it is probable that in common years, when, in order to keep up the price at home, some sale in the foreign market is most necessary, very little corn would be exported from Great Britain.

When the price of wheat is from 44s. to 48s.

per quarter, neither the exportation of British wheat, nor the importation of foreign on low duties, is allowed; from which it may be inferred, that it is the opinion of the legislature, that between 44s. and 48s. is the medium price at which wheat ought to be sold in the markets of this country, for the encouragement of the farmer on one hand, and the comfortable subsistence of the people on the other. It has been remarked by attentive observers, that in manufacturing towns there is more regularity of conduct, and more productive industry, when corn is not at a price unusually low; but the condition of the country labourer certainly requires, that the price of it should be low, that he may be enabled by his wages to purchase what is necessary for his subsistence—As soon as the price of wheat passes 48s. the legislature have thought it their duty to attend to the necessities of the poor, and to encourage the importation of foreign wheat, by allowing it to be imported at very low duties.

The whole of this system wisely corresponds with those principles by which the corn trade ought to be conducted. The only doubt that can be entertained upon it is, whether the export does not stop before the price is sufficiently high for the encouragement of agriculture, and the interest of the farmer—It is singular that the price at which corn is prohibited to be exported is now lower than it was above a century ago, and that the price, at which foreign corn is permitted to be imported at reduced duties, is now also lower than it was above a century ago; and during this period the prices of the principal sorts of corn, taken upon an average of a number of years, do not appear to have advanced in an equal degree with the

prices of many other articles which are of general use, and even of some which are the produce of the farm; and there are those who doubt whether this circumstance has not contributed to make the quantity of corn produced, not equal to the consumption, as it is at present.

The policy of our laws has, however, produced an effect highly advantageous, both to the grower and consumer of corn, by rendering the vicissitudes of plenty and dearth less frequent than they were formerly, and by making the price of corn more steady and uniform.—The farmer may now at all times depend on a certain reasonable price, and feels that his labour in cultivating his land, will not be wholly unprofitable—On the other hand, the poor have no reason to apprehend, as in ancient times, the calamities of dearth and famine.

The committee having now traced the principles, by which, in their opinion, the corn trade ought to be regulated, and to which our corn laws appear in general to conform, they will proceed to consider in what respects these laws are defective, and what amendments ought to be made to them, so as to make them fully correspond with the principles before stated.

It appears from the provisions of ancient statutes, and particularly from the preamble of statute 15, Henry VI. cap. 2. that it was not lawful\* to carry corn out of the realm without the licence of the king;—by this statute permission was first given to export several sorts of corn out of the realm, whenever the price of each sort was at, or below the prices therein mentioned.

\* In Maddox's history of the Exchequer, chap. 14. sect. 15, there is an account of several amerciaments for exporting corn, without license, in very early times.



By subsequent statutes, the export of the different sorts of corn was in like manner allowed, whenever the price of each sort was at, or below the prices mentioned in each statute respectively.—The following table, N° IV., will shew what the prices were, at or below which corn was allowed to be exported at different periods, according to the monies of the times.

It is extraordinary, that no one of the before-mentioned statutes, nor any statute till the 13th year of your Majesty's reign, cap. 43, enacts any rule for ascertaining the prices, according to which the export should be allowed, or the bounty be paid, though some of them establish regulations for ascertaining the quantity of corn so exported, and the quantity on which the bounty was to be paid.

NOTE. The several sorts of corn so exported, during all this time, paid the duty of export, which varied according as the law stood in each period. By the act of tonnage and poundage, 12 Charles II. cap. 4. the duty on corn exported was the same whatever the price might be; it was not, however, high, as corn of every sort was rated at a very low value in the book of rates.

NOTE. A bounty was given by 1st William and Mary, cap. 12. and the duties were taken off by the 11 and 12 William, cap. 20. A bounty was likewise given on several sorts of corn exported, by the before-mentioned act of 1st William and Mary, which bounty has been varied by several subsequent statutes. The following table, No. 5, will shew all the variations made in the bounty on each sort of corn, and the prices according to which it was paid.

## No. 4. PRICES at or below

By Statutes,	Wheat.	Rye.
15 Hen. VI. c. 2.....per Quarter.	s. d.	s. d.
1 and 2 Ph. and M. c. 5.....	6 8	—
1 Eliz. c. 11.....	6 8	4 —
5 Eliz. c. 5.....	6 8	5 —
13 Eliz. c. 13.....	10 —	8 —
	When the prices were made by the	
35 Eliz. c. 7.....	20 —	13 4
1 Jas. c. 25.....	26 8	15 —
21 Jas. c. 28.....	32 —	20 —
3 Ch <sup>s</sup> . I. c. 4.....	The same prices	
12 Cha <sup>s</sup> . II. c. 4.....	40 —	24 —
15 Cha <sup>s</sup> . II. c. 7.....	48 —	32 —
1 W <sup>m</sup> . and M. stat. 1. c. 12.....	No custom, or	
11 and 12 W <sup>m</sup> . c. 20.....	The subsidy, and	
13 Geo. III. c. 43.....	44 —	28 —

The officers of the customs, being left without any rule prescribed by law, pursued a method of their own: They obliged the exporter, in making the entry outwards, to swear, that the prices of the corn, so entered for exportation, did not, on the last market day, exceed the prices at which export was to be allowed, or bounty to be paid; and sometimes they obliged the exporter to produce a certificate to the same effect on the oath of some supposed credible witness.—This practice was probably founded on the directions given in the 1st W<sup>m</sup> and Mary, cap. 12. for ascertaining the quantity and quality of the corn so exported.

which Exportation was permitted.

Pease.	Beans.	Oats.	Barley.	Malt.	Beer or Big.	BuckWheat.
s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		
—	—	—	3 —	—		
—	—	—	3 —	—		
4 —	4 —	2 —	3 3	3 3		
8 —	8 —	—	6 8	6 8		
so reasonable and moderate as that no prohibition was queen or council, or justices of assize, or of the peace.						
13 4	13 4	—	12 —	12 —		
15 —	15 —	—	14 —	14 —		
16 —	16 —	—	16 —	16 —		
as in the last act.						
24 —	24 —	16 —	20 —	20 —		
32 —	32 —	13 4	28 —	28 —	10 —	28
any fee or reward, to be paid on exportation.						
all duties, to cease.						
28 —	28 —	14 —	22 —	—	22	
Malt made of barley, beer, or big, to be governed by those grains respectively.						

By the before-mentioned statute of 13th year of your Majesty's reign, it was enacted, that in cases of exportation from the ports of England, the prices of corn should be ascertained, according to the methods directed by preceding acts of parliament, as well as by that act, for ascertaining the prices of corn or grain in cases of importation; and the bounty was to be paid according to prices ascertained in the same manner.—It is proper to observe, that the prices for regulating importation were, according to the 1st James II. chap. 19. ascertained only four times in each year.



## No. 5. PRICES at and below which

By Statutes.		Wheat.	Rye.	Pease.
		s.	s	
1st W <sup>m</sup> . & M. stat. 1. c. 12.	The price per quarter ... ..	48	32 —	—
	Bounty ... ..	5	3 6	—
5th Anne, c. 8.	{ The price per quarter }	—	—	—
	Bounty ... ..	—	—	—
5th Anne, c. 29.	{ The price quarter }	{ on malt made of wheat ... }	{ —	—
	Bounty ... ..	5		
	Price per qr.	44		
13 Geo. III. c. 43.	Bounty ... ..	5 and on all malt made of wheat.	28 3	—

—By the same act of 13th year of your Majesty's reign, the prices of corn in Scotland, both in cases of exportation and importation, and for the payment of the bounty, were to be ascertained by returns made four times a year, from the sheriffs or stewards depute, or their deputies, on the oaths of two persons qualified in the manner in that act described.

This method of ascertaining the prices being found very inconvenient and detrimental to the

certain Bounties were given on Exportation.

Beans.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Barley.	Malt made of Barley.	Beer or Big.	Buck Wheat.
—	—	—	s. d. 24 —	s. d. 24 —		
—	—	—	2 6	2 6		
—	s. 15	—	—	—	s. d. 24 —	
—	—	s. d. 2 6		—	2 6	
—	—	from Scotland.			from Scotland.	
—	—	The same from England as from Scotland.	} —	} —	The same from England as from Scotland.	
—	14	—	22 —	22 —	22 —	
—	2	2 6	2 6	2 6	2 6	
					and also on malt made of beer or big.	

export trade of corn, as the prices which were to govern the exportation and the payment of the bounty could be altered only every three months, though the real prices might, in the mean time, be very much increased or diminished, it was enacted in the next session, by statute, of the 14th year of your Majesty's reign, cap. 64, that the prices of corn exported from Great Britain should be regulated and governed by the average prices,

at which such corn should be respectively sold in the public market, at or near the port or place from whence such corn was intended to be exported, on the last market day preceding the shipping thereof; and that the respective bounties on each sort of corn should be paid according to such prices.

But even in this act no method was prescribed for ascertaining what these prices were, so that the officers of the customs were still obliged to have recourse to the method that had before been adopted and practised by themselves.—But this last-mentioned act, as far as relates to the port of London, and the ports of the counties of Kent and Essex, was repealed by statute of 21st year of your Majesty's reign, cap. 50, and a new mode of ascertaining the prices in those ports was therein enacted; an officer, created by that act, and called *inspector of returns of corn*, was directed to receive from the several factors of the corn exchange an account of the quantity of each sort of corn they had sold in the course of the preceding week, and of the prices, and the names of the purchasers; and, from the prices at which the whole aggregate quantity of each sort of corn so respectively sold in the course of that week, he was to compute and form an average price of each sort of corn, and such price was to be taken as the average price during that week, and the import and export of each sort of corn, and the bounty payable thereon, was to be thereby regulated in the port of London, and in the ports of Kent and Essex.

In this state, which was certainly very imperfect with respect to all the ports of Great Britain, except those of London, Kent, and Essex, the law for ascertaining the prices of corn, as far as



related to exportation and the payment of the bounty, continued till the passing of the act of last year.

As it appears by some ancient statutes not to have been lawful to carry corn out of the realm without the licence of the king, it may be collected from others that it was generally lawful to import foreign corn into this kingdom; and from both these circumstances it may justly be inferred, that the legislature in ancient times was more solicitous to provide for the plentiful subsistence of the people, than to encourage tillage within the realm.

By statute 3d Edward IV. c. 7. several sorts of foreign corn were for the first time prohibited to be imported, till the price of each exceeded the respective prices mentioned in the said statute.

This statute continued in force till 21st James I. when it was repealed, and the importation of foreign corn was again generally permitted; but corn so imported was always subject to a duty, which varied according to the law in each period.

By 12th Chas. II. c. 4. the importation of foreign corn first began to be regulated in the manner that subsists at present, that is, by imposing high duties when the price of each sort of corn did not exceed certain prices, and low duties when it exceeded the said prices.

The following Table, No. 6. will show the prices at which corn was at any time prohibited to be imported, and at what prices the high and low duties on importation respectively took place, and what was the amount of those high and low duties upon each sort of corn at each period respectively.

## No. 6. PRICES at or under

By Statutes,		Wheat.
3 Edw. IV. c. 2. . . . . repealed by 21 Ja. I.	..... per Quarter,	6s 8
13 Geo. III. c. 43. . . . .	..... per Boll, .	—

## PRICES at which certain high or low

By Statutes,		Wheat.
12 Cha. II. c. 4. . . . .	Not exceeding per Quarter	44s —
	Duty . . . . .	40 —
	Exceeding the above prices,	
	Duty . . . . .	6 8
15 Cha. II. c. 7. . . . .	Not exceeding . . . . .	48 —
	Duty . . . . .	5 4
	Exceeding the last-mentioned prices,	
22 Cha. II. c. 13. . . . .	Not exceeding . . . . .	53 4
	Duty . . . . .	16 —
	Exceeding the above prices,	
	but not exceeding . . .	80 —
	Duty . . . . .	8 —
	Exceeding the last-mentioned prices,	
13 Geo. III. c. 43. . . . .	At or above . . . . .	48 —
	Duty . . . . .	— 6
	Do on wheat flour per cwt.	— 2
	Not exceeding the last-mentioned	
15 Geo. III. c. 1. . . . .	.....	When bar- at one
27 Geo. III. c. 13. . . . . (Consolidating Act.)	Under . . . . . per Quarter	48 —
	Duty . . . . .	24 3
	At or above.	
	Duty . . . . .	— 6

which Importation was prohibited.

Rye.	Pease.	Beans.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Barley.	Malt.	Beer or Big.	Buck Wheat.
4 <sup>s</sup> —	—	—	—	—	3 —			
—	—	—	—	16 Into Scot- land.				

Duties on Importation were to take place.

Rye.	Pease.	Beans.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Barley.	Malt.	Beer or Big.	Buck Wheat.
36 <sup>s</sup> —	—	28 <sup>s</sup> —	—	—	28 <sup>s</sup> —	28 <sup>s</sup> —		
26 8	—	26 8	—	—	26 8	26 8		
5 —	—	5 —	—	—	—	—		
32 —	32 —	32 —	13 --4	—	28 —	28 —	—	28 —
4 —	4 —	4 —	1 —4	—	2 8	2 —8	—	2 —
the low duties imposed by 12 Cha <sup>s</sup> II. ch. 4.								
40 —	40 —	40 —	16 —	—	32 —	32 —	—	32 —
16 —	16 —	16 —	5 —4	—	16 —	16 —	—	16 —

When rye, pease, beans, oats, barley, malt, or buck wheat, exceed those prices, then they are to pay a duty as before this act—further 5 per cent. was laid on French or pearl barley.

the low duties imposed by 12 Cha<sup>s</sup> II. ch. 4.

32 —	32 —	32 —	16 —	—	24 —	—	24 —
— 3	— 3	— 3	— 2	—	— 2	—	— 2

prices, the high duties imposed by 12 Cha<sup>s</sup> II. ch. 4.

ley is imported at 2<sup>d</sup> duty, Indian corn or maïse may be imported penny.

32 —	32 —	32 —	16 —	—	24 —	—	24 —
22 —	18 4	22 —	6 7	—	22 —	—	22 —
— 3	— 3	— 3	— 2	—	— 2	—	— 2



Till the first year of James II. no rule had been enacted for ascertaining the prices, according to which the high or low duties on corn imported were to take place; but as it was then found by experience, that great quantities of corn had been imported, without paying the proper duties, it was enacted by statute 1 James II. chap. 19, That the justices, at their Michaelmas and Easter session, by the oaths of two or more persons, not being dealers, and by such other ways and means as to them should seem fit, should examine and determine the common market prices of middling English corn, as the same was commonly bought and sold in the counties where any foreign corn might be imported, and certify the same to the chief officer of the customs at the port where the importation might be, and the duty on foreign corn imported was to be paid according to such certificate; and the same method of ascertaining the prices was to be pursued by the lord mayor and aldermen, in the city of London, in the months of October and April; and by statute of sixth year of your Majesty's reign, chap. 17. they were to ascertain the prices in like manner in the months of January and July.

The justices in some counties having neglected to send their certificates at the Michaelmas session of 1728, gave occasion to passing statute 2 Geo. II. chap. 18, by which, in order to remedy the past neglect, the justices of those counties were authorized to settle and determine the prices at the next quarter session. And it was further directed, that, in all future cases of like neglect, the collector should be empowered to receive the duties on corn imported according to the lowest prices mentioned in stat. 22 Car. II. chap. 13.

But the mode of ascertaining the prices under statute 1 James II. chap. 19. having been found, upon further experience, to be ineffectual, a new method was established; and it was enacted by stat. 5 Geo. II. chap. 12, that the justices in every county, where corn is imported, should, at every quarter session give in charge to the grand jury to make enquiry and presentment upon their oaths of the common market prices of middling English corn, of the respective sorts mentioned in statute 22 Charles II. chap. 13; this presentment was to be certified by the justices to the chief officer of the ports where corn is imported, and the duties on foreign corn imported were to be paid according to the prices mentioned in such certificate.

The method, however, of ascertaining, in the port of London, the prices of corn, as directed by the statute 1 James II. was not repealed by this act. By this statute all foreign corn once imported was forbid to be exported from any of the ports of England, or even carried coastwise from one port of England to another; but this restraint was not extended to the ports of Scotland.

The statute of the 13th year of your Majesty's reign, chap. 43, made no alteration in the method of ascertaining the prices for the purposes of importation in the ports of England, but left it as directed by former acts. But with respect to Scotland, it directed that the prices should be ascertained by the sheriffs and stewards depute, or their deputies, in the manner already mentioned.

By statute of 21st year of your Majesty's reign, chap. 50, a new method of ascertaining the prices in the port of London, and in the ports of Kent and Essex, for regulating the importation of corn, was enacted. It was the same as that which has

already been described for regulating the exportation; and payment of the bounty.

In this state the law for ascertaining the prices of corn, for the purpose of regulating the importation thereof, continued till the passing of the act of last year. It was certainly much more perfect, than the mode for ascertaining the prices, that were to regulate the exportation and payment of the bounty; and the legislature appears never till last session to have directed its attention to the prevention of frauds in the exportation of British corn, or in the payment of bounty, in the same degree as to the prevention of frauds in the importation of foreign corn.

There exists, however, in the laws of this country another method for ascertaining the prices of the several sorts of corn in this kingdom, though enacted for another purpose. By statute of the 10th year of your Majesty's reign, chap. 39, entitled, "An act for registering the prices at which corn is sold in the several counties of Great Britain, and the quantities exported and imported," the justices, at the quarter-session for each county, riding, division, or stewardry, held after the 29th of September in every year, are directed to order returns to be made weekly of the prices of wheat, rye, barley, oats, and beans, and of big in Scotland (pease are omitted), from such and so many market towns as they shall think fit, not being less than two, nor more than six, in each county, and to appoint a proper person, being an inhabitant, for the purpose of making such returns to an officer created by this act, who was to be appointed by the commissioners of the treasury, and was to receive and publish them in manner hereafter mentioned.



The meal-weighers of the city of London are directed to make the like returns of corn sold in the said city. In case the justices neglected to appoint the persons before mentioned, the lords of treasury were authorized to appoint them; and the persons so appointed were to be paid a sum not exceeding two shillings for each return, upon a certificate from the receiver, that such return had been properly made. And an abstract of all these returns is directed to be published by such receiver once a week in the London Gazette, and to be transmitted four times in every year to the clerk of the peace of each county, and to the lord mayor and aldermen of the city of London.

The committee have examined the receiver of corn returns, appointed under the act, and they find that the provisions of this act have been completely executed in every part of England:—that the justices, at their sessions, have regularly appointed the persons who make the returns; and that the lords of the treasury have been never under the necessity of exercising the authority vested in them, in case of the neglect of the justices: that the returns are generally made from three to six markets of each county: that the persons making the returns are satisfied with the allowance of two shillings for each return; and the receiver is of opinion that these returns in general are as carefully made as the prescribed manner of making them will admit. The receiver also informed the committee, that from Scotland the returns, immediately after passing the act, were made pretty generally; but that the magistrates have by degrees ceased to execute the law, so that he has received of late no return from that part of the united kingdom, except from Invera-

ray ; and the reason, as he believes, is, that the magistrates consider the execution of this act as an unnecessary expence.

The committee have thought fit to state the several regulations of this act, and the manner in which they have been executed, in order to show that there exists a method of collecting the prices of the several sorts of corn in the markets of this kingdom, which in England continues to be completely executed, and which was executed in Scotland for some time after passing the act, though this act was made for a different purpose than that of regulating the importation or exportation of corn, or the payment of the bounties. —And it was to the averages, formed according to the directions of this act, that your Majesty found it necessary to resort, when the act of last year failed in its execution, and when you was graciously pleased to make regulations for the importation and exportation of the different sorts of corn by your late orders in council.

The committee will have occasion also to refer to the regulations of this act, in the advice which they shall think it their duty to offer to your Majesty at the conclusion of this representation.

The committee will proceed next to state the regulations of the act of the last year ; and they will then consider what additions and amendments should be made to this act, and to the corn laws in general.

This act was made from a conviction that the provisions of former laws for ascertaining the prices of corn were very imperfect, and that great frauds had been committed under them. There can be no doubt of the existence of these frauds, as has been shown more fully in a former repre-

sentation on this subject, which the committee presented to your Majesty.—The principal provisions in which this act differs from former laws are, that it divides England into districts, and the average prices taken in each district, in the manner therein directed, are to regulate and govern the importation and exportation of the several sorts of corn, and the payment of the bounty thereon, in every such district. The city of London, and the counties of Kent, Essex, and Sussex, form one district, and the rest of England is divided into eleven other districts, each consisting at least of two counties, except that the county of Norfolk is made a district of itself.

In the district which includes London, and the counties of Kent, Essex, and Sussex, the average prices are to be taken from the market of London, according to a new and improved method.

Instead of requiring the oath of only two corn-factors, chosen by lot, to the truth of their returns, all the corn-factors within the city of London, and the suburbs thereof, are to swear that they will make true returns; and any person exercising the business of a corn-factor, without having taken this oath, and obtained a certificate thereof from the lord mayor, is to forfeit L. 50. A weekly average is to be made up of these returns in the manner directed by the former act, and the certificate of such weekly average sent to the collector was not to regulate the exportation of the several sorts of corn, and the bounty payable thereon, for the week to which these returns refer, as directed by the said act, but it is to regulate the same from the time that such certificate is respectively received by the collector of each port, to the time that a certificate of a new average



shall be received by him ; and for the purpose of regulating the importation of foreign corn, an average is to be made up, not of the returns of thirteen weeks, as directed by the former law, but of the six weeks preceding every quarter-session, except in the case of oats, the importation of which is still to be regulated by an average made from the returns of thirteen weeks ; and a certificate of such averages, sent to the collector of each of the ports, is to govern and regulate the importation from the receipt thereof to the time that he receives another certificate.

In the other eleven districts the justices, at the Michaelmas quarter-session, are to nominate certain principal market-towns, not being more than twelve nor less than eight in each district, from which returns of the prices of corn are to be sent.—There are some exceptions made in the act with respect to the number of market-towns in particular districts, from a consideration of local circumstances.—The justices are to appoint, also, from among the chief constables, or such other persons as to them shall seem proper (not being dealers in corn, &c.), one or more persons residing in or near such market-towns, to collect weekly an account of the quantities and prices of the corn sold therein, from those who buy the same ;—these persons are to be called *inspectors of the prices of corn returns*, and they are directed to return in every week, to the receiver of corn returns in London, the weekly prices and quantities of corn bought in each market town.—Each inspector is to take an oath to make true returns to the receiver of corn returns, according to the accounts delivered to him by the several buyers, and to use his best endeavours to procure true

accounts.—The receiver of corn returns is required to make up a weekly average, and also an average of the six weeks preceding every quarter-session, of the returns received by him from each district, according to the manner practised in the city of London; as before described.—He is to transmit a certificate of each weekly average, and also a certificate of each quarterly average, collected from the returns of each district, to the ports of such district respectively, and such weekly certificate is to regulate and govern the exportation of corn, and the bounty payable thereon; and such quarterly certificate is to regulate and govern the importation of foreign corn, from the receipt of the same by each collector to the time that he shall receive a new certificate.

This act contains many good regulations for ascertaining the prices of corn, so as to prevent many of the frauds committed in the importation and exportation of it, and in obtaining the bounties.—But the several clauses of the act were very imperfectly drawn, so that, at the time that the committee laid before your Majesty their first representation, this act had failed in its execution in every district, except in that, which is composed of the port of London, and the ports of the counties of Kent, Essex, and Sussex;—since that time five districts have made returns conformable to the act, but in the six others the act has not been carried hitherto into execution.

Your Majesty's attorney and solicitor-general, in their letter of the 18th December last, annexed to the former representation of this committee to your Majesty, gave it as their opinion, "That in those districts where market-towns have not

“ been selected and nominated, or inspectors appointed by the justices at the last Michaelmas quarter-session, they cannot now be appointed, as no authority is given by the act for that purpose.” And as the magistrates in several districts have omitted to exercise the powers given to them in these respects, the act, as applicable to the whole kingdom, ceases to be operative, and must therefore, as a general regulation, be considered as existing no longer. All the powers given by former laws to this end are by this act repealed; so that it is become absolutely necessary to pass a new law. And with this view it may be proper to consider, what parts of the act of last year, or of the acts that were thereby repealed, it may be fit to revive; what parts of existing laws it may be fit to continue; and what new provisions it may be right to propose to the legislature for their judgment and decision.

The committee, therefore, humbly offer the following advice :

- 1st. That England continue to be divided into districts, according to the plan of the act of last session; and that Scotland be divided into districts in like manner.

The committee think, that according to the true principles of the corn trade, as before stated, one general average ought to be formed, and taken from the prices of the markets of the whole kingdom, to regulate and govern importation and exportation, and the payment of the bounty, in all the ports thereof.



Such a regulation would tend to equalize the prices over all the country, to secure to those parts which may be in distress, a supply from the redundancy of more plentiful districts, and to preserve in the kingdom a stock, at all times, sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants.—It would also remove the principal objection urged against the payment of the bounty, as the bounty would not in that case operate, as it does now, to force corn out of parts of the kingdom for the supply of foreign nations, when other parts of the kingdom are in want of it; for as long as so large a bounty can be obtained by exporting corn to foreign countries, it can hardly be supposed, that corn will be carried coastwise (in which case no bounty is paid) for the relief of any other district at a considerable distance.—But as it is probable that the landholders, at least in some counties, will not approve of this plan, and as they now appear to be satisfied with having the kingdom divided into districts, and making the average price of each district the rule for governing importation and exportation in all the ports of such district, so much attention is due to their opinion and wishes, that it would not be advisable to make any alterations therein, contrary to their inclination.

This plan of districts is certainly greatly preferable, and much less liable to fraud, than that of making the price of each port the rule to govern importation and exportation at such port.—The committee do not think fit to offer any opinion on the manner, in which the districts were formed in the act of last year, as this arrangement has so lately met with the approbation of parliament.

But, in order to make the system complete, it is necessary, that Scotland should be divided in

like manner into districts, and that importation and exportation there, should no longer be regulated according to the defective and discordant system of former laws, and that in a business of common concern, every part of the united kingdom should be made subject to the same regulations.—It was shewn by the committee, in their first representation to your Majesty, that just before the late orders in council were issued, wheat was exported from Scotland to foreign parts upon bounty, while the price of that article was so high in England, as to open the ports there for the importation of foreign wheat upon the low duties.

2d. That whenever the export of any sort of corn is stopped in any one district, because the price thereof is above the export price, corn of the same sort should not be allowed to be carried from thence, coastwise, to any other district, the ports of which are open for the exportation thereof.

This regulation will tend greatly to prevent fraud; and as the price of any sort of corn in a district, the ports of which are open for exportation, must be lower than in a district, the ports of which are shut, it is evident that it cannot be carried for consumption to a district, the ports of which are open for exportation.

3d. That the act of 10th Geo. III. chap. 39, for registering the prices of corn, so far as relates to the appointment of inspectors, be repealed, and that the registry of corn, published weekly in the Gazette, be formed upon the averages taken, according to the prices returned

by the inspectors, appointed under the act of last year.

Though these averages were directed by the two several acts before mentioned, to be taken for different purposes, there can be no reason why they should not be taken in the same way, and by the same persons.—The prices of the several sorts of corn, as taken in these two ways, will frequently be different, as is shewn in paper No. 4, in the Appendix.—The prices, as taken in one way, are published in the Gazette, to enable the merchant to speculate; but when he brings his corn to port, in order to import or export it, he will often find that the prices, as taken in the other way, are not the same as those, on which he speculated, and he is thereby deceived.—The manner of forming these averages in the act of last year, is certainly the most accurate, as is clearly shewn in paper, No. 4, before mentioned.

If the two modes of collecting the prices should be allowed at the same time to subsist, the counties will be put to the expence of two classes of inspectors; and one objection made to the act of last year is, the expence incurred by the payment of the inspectors.—The saving arising from the abolition of one class of inspectors will nearly defray half the charge incurred by the new system.

4th. That a duty of one half-penny per last, be paid on all British corn imported coastwise, and one penny per last on all corn imported from foreign countries, into all the ports of Great Britain, as is now paid in the port of London; and, that the money arising from these duties, be made a fund for the payment



of the inspectors, and defraying the other expences incurred by this act; and that the corn returns sent by the post be not subject to the payment of postage.

The object of this proposition requires no explanation.

5th. That the inspectors be paid not by salaries, as directed by the act of last year, but by a certain allowance for each return, certified to have been properly made, by the receiver of corn returns, according to the act of the 10th year of your Majesty's reign, chap. 39.

It is obvious that the object of this regulation is, to secure the execution of the act.

6th. That in case the returns from any district shall not be completely made, according to the directions of the act, the importation and exportation of every sort of corn in that district, shall be governed by the average price of the rest of the kingdom.

It is obvious also, that this regulation tends to secure the execution of the act, and to prevent in every such district, any improper importation or exportation.

7th. That a power be lodged in your Majesty, with the advice of your privy council, during the prorogation of parliament, to prohibit generally the exportation from this kingdom of any sort of corn, and in like manner to permit, generally, the importation, on the low

duties, of any sort of foreign corn, whenever the average price thereof, taken from the *returns of the whole kingdom*, is higher than the price at or above which foreign corn is allowed by law to be imported, if your Majesty in your wisdom, for the public benefit, shall so think fit\*.

A discretionary power of this sort, appears to have been vested in the crown, by a great number of acts of parliament†, from Richard II. to the present time; the acts by which this power was granted are cited in the margin.—It has been found, by repeated experience, that the vesting such a power in the crown is necessary for the welfare of the people.—Government possesses, at all times, the best means of discerning the general exigencies of the kingdom, and the state of crops and markets in foreign countries, and there can be no just reason to suspect, that it will at any time be influenced by any bad motive to exercise this power improperly.

8th. That the collector of the customs at every port in Great Britain, do transmit, weekly, to the receiver of corn returns, an account of the quantity of the several sorts of corn shipped in such port, to be carried coastwise, with the

\* *Note to the present Edition.*—Parliament did not adopt this 7th resolution, but temporary laws have frequently passed since the year 1790, vesting in his Majesty a discretionary power of this sort, for a limited time.

† Stat. 17 Rich. II. c. 7. 15 Hen. VI. c. 2. 1 & 2 Phil. & Ma. c. 5. 13 Eliz. c. 13. 35 Eliz. c. 7. 8 Ann. c. 2. 14 Geo. II. c. 3. 15 Geo. II. c. 35. 30 Geo. II. c. 1.

name of the ship or vessel, the name of the master, and the port or place in Great Britain, to which the corn was intended to be carried; and also an account of the quantities of the several sorts of corn, brought coastwise, into each respective port, with the name of the ship or vessel, the name of the master, and the name of the port or place from whence it is brought; and that the said receiver do, at the end of every three months, transmit to the commissioners of his Majesty's customs in England and Scotland, an account, to be formed and made up in such manner as the said commissioners shall approve, of the quantity of the several sorts of corn shipped to be carried coastwise from each port, or brought coastwise into each port respectively.

There can be no doubt, that in the course of the last six months, considerable quantities of corn have been exported to foreign countries, which were shipped, under the pretence of carrying the same coastwise.

The commissioners of your Majesty's customs have the merit of using every endeavour to prevent this evil, and there are already many wise provisions in the laws of this country to make the commission of this fraud as difficult as possible. A bond is given for landing the corn so shipped, to be carried coastwise, at some specified port, or at some other port or place in Great Britain, and no where else—there can be no doubt that the regulation now proposed, will be an additional check to this practice, for by bringing into one view, an account of the whole of the corn so carried coastwise, and by comparing the quantity shipped, with



the quantity landed, every fraudulent attempt may be detected.

9th. That the warehouses in which foreign corn imported is to be lodged, under the joint lock of the king and the proprietor, according to the statute of the 13th of your Majesty's reign, chap. 43. be provided at the public expence; and that the officers of the customs, whose duty it is to attend those warehouses, be paid by the public, as is now practised with respect to the warehousing of tobacco.

There is no regulation in our system of the corn laws, that is more beneficial, and more deserves therefore to be extended and improved, than those provisions which permit the warehousing of foreign corn—this regulation tends to secure to us a very important branch of commerce—it enables our merchants, who receive corn from the Americans, in payment of their debts, to lodge it here, either for the home or foreign market, as occasion may require—it is also \* the only method of forming magazines of a public nature in this country, against times of scarcity and distress, without prejudice to the British farmer and grower of corn—if the legislature have thought it prudent to pay

\* *Note to the present Edition.*—The object of this regulation was in a great measure defeated, by clause 19, in the act passed on this occasion, which requires, that corn warehoused, when the high duty subsists, if taken out for home consumption, even when the price at the place where it is intended to be consumed is so risen, that it may be imported there on the low duty, shall pay, in addition to such low duty, a further duty, which in the case of wheat is 2s. 6d, per quarter: and it can hardly be expected that corn should be imported, to be warehoused, on such terms.

for the warehouses in which tobacco is deposited, and the charges of the officers who are appointed to attend these warehouses, it is reasonable that the public revenue should defray the like expence in support of a trade, which may, in time, prove more valuable than that of tobacco, and may become necessary, in certain contingencies, for the subsistence of your Majesty's subjects; and from what has been already experienced in the case of tobacco, the committee have reason to believe that this expence will be no considerable burthen to the revenue.

10th. That foreign corn imported, and not warehoused, be not allowed again to be exported.

When the high duties on importation subsist, foreign corn is never imported, except to be warehoused; when the low duties commence, in consequence of scarcity of corn in this country, foreign corn has frequently been imported; and in consequence of the right which the proprietors have heretofore had of re-exporting it, frauds have been committed in exporting British corn, which by law is not then exportable.—The legislature, convinced that frauds of this nature were committed, did, by the 5th Geo. II. chap. 12, prohibit the carrying foreign corn, once imported, to the open sea, in order to be landed in any other port of England.

If the public pay the expence of warehouses, as above proposed, the merchant can have little reason to complain that he is obliged to lodge his corn in a warehouse provided by the crown, under the care of the public officer.

11th. That corn so warehoused, be permitted to be taken out, to be ground by the importer or proprietor, on condition that he give bond, not subject to any stamp duty, in double the value of the said corn, that he will export from the port where it was warehoused, within two calendar months from the time of taking out the said corn, a quantity of flour equal to the corn so taken out, reckoning the quantity of wheat meal, or other ground corn, for every bushel of such corn unground, according to the proportion, as it is now settled by law; or that he will pay the duty chargeable on the said corn at the time that it was taken out of the warehouse. And that no importer or proprietor shall be entitled to the receipt of any bounty on any corn or flour exported by him, until after he has settled his account of the corn so taken out of the warehouse, and discharged his bond.

This regulation will encourage in this country the manufacturing of foreign corn into flour—It will also facilitate the trade, as many foreign countries may, at times, be desirous of obtaining from this market flour instead of corn. In consequence of the restrictions which accompany this permission, no considerable fraud can easily be committed. By statutes the 15 and 16 Geo. II. prohibited East India goods, being warehoused, are now allowed to be taken out to be dyed or glazed, on giving bond to bring them back, in a limited time, to be exported.

There is another proposition of more importance, which the committee submit with greater diffidence than any of the preceding; and which



they only venture to suggest, in order that it may be taken into consideration.

12th. That wheat be permitted to be exported, but without bounty, when the price thereof is between 44s. and 46s. \* and other corn when the prices thereof shall be in like proportion; and that wheat be allowed to be imported into this kingdom, from your Majesty's kingdom of Ireland only, on the low duties, when the price thereof is at or above 46s. and other sorts of corn when the prices shall be in like proportion.

The two regulations contained in this proposition, to take place whenever the parliament of Ireland shall make a regulation with respect to British corn, similar to the last in favour of Irish corn.

The committee are inclined to think, that these regulations are both beneficial in themselves; but

*\* Note to the present Edition.*—It will be seen by the preceding table, No. 4, that British wheat was not permitted to be exported by the laws then in force, till the price of it had fallen to 44s. per quarter. And by table No. 5, it will be seen, that British wheat, when so permitted to be exported, at the price beforementioned, was entitled to the bounty. The legislature adopted this 12th proposition, and by the law founded on it, British wheat was permitted to be exported, when the price of it was below 46s. per quarter, though it continued to be not entitled to the bounty, till it was below 44s. per quarter. The exportation of all other articles of British grain was regulated in the new act upon the same principle. See statute 31. Geo. III. chap. 30. table (B.) This regulation, by encouraging exportation, was thought to be in favour of agriculture.

they have coupled them together, as they think that the one is calculated to counteract any evil which may be supposed to arise from the other. The great corn counties of Great Britain are, in general, on the east side of the island, and there corn is, in general, cheapest. The capital is fortunately situated in the midst of them : but many of the great manufacturing counties and towns are on the opposite side of the island, and there corn is generally dearest. The first of these regulations will be beneficial to the corn counties on the east side of the island ; the last of these regulations will be beneficial to the populous and manufacturing counties and towns on the west side of the island, which are more conveniently situated for importation from Ireland ; and both regulations, taken together, will contribute to bring the price of corn in the different parts of the kingdom more to a level.

It is not probable that any greater quantity of corn will be exported without bounty, unless when corn is much dearer in foreign countries than here, a contingency which may sometimes, but does not often happen ; and there is little reason to apprehend that the importation of Irish corn into the western counties of this kingdom will discourage the agriculture of them, as much less corn is grown there than is consumed by the inhabitants, and the price of it is consequently high.

It was the opinion of the commissioners of the customs, in a report presented to the lords of the treasury in 1774, that the export of corn should be allowed to continue, when the price of corn is something higher than that, at which the bounty ceases to be paid ; and some of the best judges

on this subject have expressed the same sentiment\*.

There are several other propositions for the amendment of the corn laws of less importance than those before stated, with which the committee do

\* *Note to the present Edition.*—In addition to these twelve propositions, the legislature thought fit, in the bill then brought in, to raise what is called the importing price, that is the price of wheat and other sorts of grain, taken according to the price of grain, of the same sort, the produce of this kingdom, at or above which, foreign grain of those several sorts should be respectively permitted, from thenceforth, to be imported into this kingdom. The object of this last proposition was, by securing to the British farmer, a sufficient profit in the sale of his wheat and other grain, to encourage agriculture, and to promote inclosures, and thereby to bring into tillage a great quantity of the waste lands of the kingdom: It was also hoped, that by this encouragement the produce of wheat in the kingdom might be made equal, or more nearly so, than it had been of late, to the consumption of its inhabitants. How far this alteration in the system of our corn laws has answered the ends of promoting inclosures, and of making the produce of wheat in this kingdom equal to the consumption of its inhabitants, the reader will see by two accounts, inserted in the Appendix of the present edition. (No. 5 and 6.)

By the laws then in force, foreign wheat had hitherto been permitted to be imported, at the low duty of 6d. per quarter, when British wheat was at or above 48s. per quarter.—By the new law, foreign wheat was not permitted to be imported at the low duty of 6d. per quarter, till British wheat was at or above 54s. per quarter, so that the import price at this very low duty was raised 6s. per quarter.—It was thought, however, right, upon the same principles, which had been adopted in the 12th proposition, with respect to exportation of wheat, to make the importation of foreign wheat take place by degrees; and it was therefore enacted, that when British wheat was at or above 50s. but under 54s. per quarter, foreign wheat should be permitted to be imported, on paying a duty of 2s. 6d. per quarter. The importation of all other articles of grain, and of oatmeal, was regulated in the new act, upon the same principle. See statute Geo. III. chap. 30. Table E.



not think it necessary to trouble your Majesty ; but if it should be thought fit that any of your servants should propose a bill to parliament for improving these laws, the committee will be ready to suggest them.

As the corn laws ought, of all others, to be generally known and understood, the committee think, that the subsisting regulations, and such as may now be adopted, should be brought into as narrow a compass as possible, and that the act of the 13th of your Majesty's reign; chap. 43, and the act now to be proposed, should comprehend all the regulations that are allowed to subsist ; or perhaps, that even these two acts should be consolidated.

The committee are decidedly of opinion, that one permanent system should now be established, so that the grower of corn may know how to direct his industry and his speculations, and be sure that no temporary measure will intervene, to deprive him of the fruit of them :—The corn trade is in itself subject, from the vicissitudes of seasons, and other circumstances, to greater fluctuation than any other ; it ought not to be exposed to the additional uncertainty arising from frequent alteration of laws, and changes of system.

In forming these regulations, the lords of the committee have endeavoured equally to provide for the prosperity of the grower of corn, and the necessities of the consumer. The interests of the grower and consumer are supposed by some to be at variance :—To reconcile them as much as possible, is the end which every wise government should endeavour to attain. The interest of the consumer is entitled to the first consideration, so far as to preserve him, in every possible contin-

gency, from scarcity and distress. And as distress for want of this necessary article of subsistence cannot long exist in any country without exposing it to those commotions which frequently happen in times of dearth, it is not likely that the grower of corn would enjoy in safety the fruits of his industry, unless due attention is paid to this first and capital object ; but this point being once secured, the interests of the grower should, in the next place, occupy the particular attention of the legislature. The production of corn is the first and most important occupation of the subjects of every country, and on its success rests the main support and prosperity of every other trade. For the sake of the consumer, therefore, the most liberal encouragement and protection should be given to those employed in it ; for without offering proper incitements to their industry, plenty can never be procured : For these reasons it will be found perhaps, on due consideration, that the interests of the grower and consumer, well understood, are less at variance, than at first they may appear. In the advice, which the committee have thought it their duty to offer to your Majesty, they have aimed at discovering the point of union, at which these interests meet ; and they humbly refer to the judgment of your Majesty, how far they have accomplished the object they had in view.

# T A B L E S,

## CONTAINING

- No. 1. An Account of the Quantities of Corn and Grain exported from, and imported into, England and Scotland, for 18 Years; &c.
- No. 2. An Account of the Quantity of Corn exported for 19 Years, from 1746 to 1765, inclusive; &c.
- No. 3. An Account of the Quantity of each Sort of Corn imported into England, from 1746 to 1765, inclusive; &c.
- No. 4. How Returns of Corn are made from the Markets of Leicester and Manchester.
- No. 5. An Account of the several sorts of Grain exported and imported from and to Great Britain, for eight Years; &c.
- No. 6. An Account of the Number of Bills for Inclosure that passed the Legislature in each Year, from 1780 to 1799, inclusive; &c.



An Account of the Quantities of Corn and Grain exported from, and imported into, with the Bounties and Drawbacks paid, and the Duties received, thereon;

	WHEAT and FLOUR.		BARLEY and MALT.		OATS and OATMEAL.	
	Exported.	Imported	Exported.	Imported.	Exported.	Imported.
	Quarters. per Qr.	Quarters.	Quarters. per Qr.	Quarters.	Quarters. per Qr.	Quarters.
1771 - -	10,089	2,510	34,198	228	35,233	212,327
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 47s. 2d.	.....	Barley, 25s. 8d.	.....	Oats, 16s. 8d.	.....
1772 - -	6,959	25,474	14,031	3,068	23,599	106,820
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 50s. 8d.	.....	Barley, 25s. 4d.	.....	Oats, 16s. 2d.	.....
1773 - -	7,637	56,857	2,475	63,916	18,777	329,454
Price of the Year -	Wheat, - 51s.	.....	Barley, 28s. 4d.	.....	Oats, 17s. 2d.	.....
1774 - -	15,928	289,149	2,911	171,508	16,433	399,499
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 50s. 8d.	.....	Barley, 28s. 6d.	.....	Oats, 17s. 10d.	.....
1775 - -	91,037	560,988	51,414	139,451	26,485	384,942
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 48s. 4d.	.....	Barley, - 26s.	.....	Oats, 16s. 6d.	.....
1776 - -	210,664	20,578	136,114	8,499	34,987	378,566
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 38s. 2d.	.....	Barley, 20s. 2d.	.....	Oats, - - 15s.	.....
1777 - -	87,686	233,323	142,725	7,981	36,614	366,446
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 45s. 6d.	.....	Barley, 20s. 6d.	.....	Oats, 15s. 8d.	.....
1778 - -	141,070	106,394	103,930	42,714	56,543	201,170
Price of the Year -	Wheat, - 42s.	.....	Barley, 22s. 8d.	.....	Oats, 15s. 2d.	.....
1779 - -	222,261	5,039	85,777	7,085	22,286	348,511
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 33s. 8d.	.....	Barley, 19s. 6d.	.....	Oats, - - 14s.	.....
1780 - -	224,039	3,915	191,563	352	27,023	195,224
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 35s. 8d.	.....	Barley, - 17s.	.....	Oats, 12s. 10d.	.....
1781 - -	103,021	159,866	150,468	56	41,717	109,446
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 44s. 8d.	.....	Barley, 17s. 2d.	.....	Oats, 13s. 8d.	.....
1782 - -	145,152	80,695	127,744	13,592	23,917	38,562
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 47s. 10d.	.....	Barley, 22s. 6d.	.....	Oats, 52s. 2d.	.....
1783 - -	51,943	584,183	54,065	144,926	1,826	220,942
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 52s. 8d.	.....	Barley, 30s. 4d.	.....	Oats, 19s. 10d.	.....
1784 - -	89,288	216,947	66,889	77,182	13,511	266,998
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 48s. 10d.	.....	Barley, 27s. 10d.	.....	Oats, 18s. 4d.	.....
1785 - -	132,685	110,863	166,448	67,212	25,273	274,089
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 41s. 10d.	.....	Barley, - 24s.	.....	Oats, 17s. 2d.	.....
1786 - -	205,466	51,463	111,598	62,374	19,293	478,473
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 38s. 10d.	.....	Barley, 24s. 4d.	.....	Oats, - - 18s.	.....
1787 - -	120,536	59,339	135,089	43,244	17,098	512,004
Price of the Year -	Wheat, 41s. 2d.	.....	Barley, 22s. 8d.	.....	Oats, 16s. 8d.	.....
1788 - -	82,971	148,710	212,811	11,479	14,418	413,827
Price of the Year -	Wheat, - 45s.	.....	Barley, - 22s.	.....	Oats, 15s. 8d.	.....
18 Years.	1,948,452	2,716,293	1,790,250	864,867	464,433	5,245,300
		1,948,452	864,867	.....	.....	464,433
Balance Imported	.....	767,841	.....	.....	.....	4,780,867
Balance Exported	.....	.....	925,383	.....	.....	.....

The price of the grain being fairly considered, both on importation and exportation.

	WHEAT.	BARLEY.	OATS.	RYE.	BEANS.
The average price of the above 18 years.....per Qr.	44s. 9d.	23s. 7d.	16. 2d.	29s. 8d.	28s. 10d.
The finest and coarsest sorts of grain generally exceed and reduce the average price as follows; viz.....per Qr.	4s.	2s.	2s.	2s.	4s.

No. 1.

England and Scotland, for 18 years, from 5th January 1770, to 5th January 1789, together with the average price of corn in England, under each year.

RYE.		BEANS and PEASE.		PAID ON EXPORTATION.		Received on Importation.
Exported.	Imported.	Exported	Imported.	Bounties.		Duties.
Quarters p.Q.	Quarters.	Quarters. per Q.	Quarters.	£.	s. d.	£. s. d.
.....	2,179	17,053	131	6,170	7 6	13,717 11 —
Rye, 34r. 4d. ....	4,799	Beans, 28r. 6d. ....	490	.....	.....	3,766 1 10
Rye, 36r. 8d. ....	9,255	Beans — 30r. ....	61,116	.....	.....	Duty free.
Rye, 33r. 4d. ....	2,260	Beans — 33r. ....	24,591	6,023	3 10	13,715 15 11
Rye, 34r. 4d. ....	2,722	Beans, 31r. 2d. ....	44,452	7,849	10 11	1,798 16 8
Rye, 32r. 10d. ....	10,999	Beans, 28r. 8d. ....	38,843	52,248	— 9	786 8 —
Rye, 26r. 10d. ....	946	Beans, 26r. 6d. ....	63,829	45,666	16 5	102 1 10
Rye — 28r. ....	1,706	Beans, 28r. 6d. ....	57,933	43,806	7 9	224 8 6
Rye, 28r. 4d. ....	3,199	Beans, 27r. 8d. ....	43,745	54,506	2 6	97 1 2
Rye, 23r. 4d. ....	6,305	Beans, 24r. 2d. ....	25,125	77,715	17 —	29 17 1
Rye, 22r. 2d. ....	2,701	Beans, 22r. 2d. ....	17,753	32,270	14 7	46 9 2
Rye, 26r. 10d. ....	4,003	Beans — 23r. ....	8,558	47,914	7 4	55 7 1
Rye, 28r. 10d. ....	3,365	Beans, — 26r. ....	31,614	13,357	4 8	461 11 3
Rye, 35r. 8d. ....	6,731	Beans, 34r. 10d. ....	45,816	23,620	4 6	255 3 5
Rye, 32r. 2d. ....	13,163	Beans, 32r. 2d. ....	16,813	26,314	5 10	207 1 6
Rye, — 28r. ....	6,736	Beans, 30r. 8d. ....	35,709	53,804	— 4	79 19 4
Rye, 27r. 2d. ....	12,683	Beans, 33r. 2d. ....	42,884	56,979	18 9	9 5 11
Rye, 27r. 8d. ....	31,220	Beans, 31r. 10d. ....	10,902	45,182	12 3	.....
Rye, 27r. 8d. ....	.....	Beans, 27r. 2d. ....	.....	.....	.....	6,665 14 10
108,739	280,398	425,664	570,304	593,429	15 5	4,153 10 11
.....	108,739	.....	425,664	4,153	10 11	.....
.....	171,659	.....	144,640	597,583	6 4	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	137,167	8 6	.....
Balance paid in bounties, &c. ....				460,415	17 10	.....
The balance paid in the 18 years amounts to.....				4,776,000	— —	.....
Total paid for grain and bounties, &c. ....L				5,236,415	17 10	.....
or L. 291,000 per annum.				Exports and Imports, Extracted from the Custom House Books.		
and the great exportation trade entirely lost, which, from 1746				Prices of the 18 years, Extracted from the Corn Re-		
to 1765, produced a net gain of L. 651,000 per annum. (See				gister established by Act of		
SMITH'S Corn Tracts, fo. 136.)				10th Geo. III.		

The average prices of the 19 years (from 1746 to 1765) are } p. Qr.  
collected from the best authority that could be obtained ... }

WHEAT.	BARLEY.	OATS.
32. 3.	17. 8.	14.

## APPENDIX, No. II.

An ACCOUNT of the quantity of corn exported for nineteen years, from 1746 to 1765, inclusive, with the bounty paid thereon; distinguishing each year, and the several sorts of corn.—N. B. This account is for England.

	Barley.	Malt.	Oatmeal.	Rye.	Wheat and wheat-meal	Oats.	Bounties paid.
	Qrs. B.	Qrs. B.	Qrs. B.	Qrs. B.	Qrs. B.	Qrs. B.	£. s. d.
1747.....	103,140 2	361,289 3	2,122 4	92,718 3	266,906 7	12,010 2	141,123 1 10
1748.....	73,857 0	349,363 0	3,768 4	103,891 4	543,387 5	15,813 1	202,637 14 11
1749.....	52,621 3	355,469 5	1,281 2	106,312 4	629,049 0	12,605 7	228,566 8 1
1750.....	224,500 7	330,754 2	4,283 4	99,049 3	947,602 1	10,554 2	262,583 — 2
1751.....	32,698 0	256,547 4	2,476 2	71,048 4	661,416 4	8,459 1	154,904 07 4
1752.....	106,331 3	287,578 6	1,590 1	57,847 2	429,279 4	9,666 3	186,218 7 —
1753.....	67,049 0	274,424 7	7,012 1	24,835 7	299,608 7	11,107 2	222,508 8 6
1754.....	47,776 3	321,995 0	2,330 2	42,915 1	356,270 1	20,228 1	143,412 7 2
1755.....	32,836 0	341,568 6	1,112 2	43,441 7	237,459 2	7,779 5	166,134 7 4
1756.....	26,938 5	236,925 6	2,310 4	29,968 7	101,936 4	8,499 5	109,228 1 8
1757.....	7,094 7	56,164 2	4,417 6	907 1	11,226 0	12,117 0	22,558 16 9
1758.....	691 0	10,728 1	1,831 4	—	9,293 6	7,932 4	3,752 6 10
1759.....	22,862 4	166,079 0	3,134 6	41,480 2	226,426 0	6,566 5	53,802 9 2
1760.....	34,592 4	224,195 0	2,388 4	52,766 4	390,710 4	12,299 5	118,247 4 5
1761.....	97,897 1	279,051 5	2,839 6	57,571 1	440,746 2	14,683 0	153,558 4 1
1762.....	130,873 3	254,429 5	1,368 4	28,410 2	294,500 0	145,025 7	129,210 2 6
1763.....	38,390 1	165,494 6	1,664 4	12,933 7	427,074 3	10,844 1	152,879 13 2
1764.....	9,218 6	223,220 5	1,101 0	27,690 1	396,537 5	8,436 5	149,607 2 7
1765.....	19,631 5	208,235 3	2,047 6	12,083 7	167,030 0	9,633 5	33,933 14 8

N. B. The comptroller general cannot carry an account of the bounties actually paid, further back than the year 1747—but it appears, by an account of the bounties payable since the commencement of the present century, that the greatest bounty was paid in the year 1750.

THOMAS IRVING,  
Inspector General.

Inspector General's Office,  
Custom House, London, 25 Feb. 1790.



## APPENDIX, No. III.

an ACCOUNT of the Quantity of each Sort of Corn imported into England from 1746 to 1765, inclusive; distinguishing each Year, with the Amount of Duties paid thereon, distinguishing each Year.

Years.	Barley.	Beans.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Pease.	Rye.	Wheat.	Wheat. Flour.	Total Duties.
	Qrs Bush.						Qrs Bush.		
17.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
18.....	14 4	—	—	—	—	—	385 0	—	24 11 6
19.....	40 0	—	Qrs Bush.	—	—	—	382 0	—	25 5 10
20.....	—	—	20 3	—	—	—	279 5	—	12 18 9
21.....	—	—	2,291 1	Qrs Bush.	—	—	3 0	—	57 9 3
22.....	— 2	—	250 0	10 0	—	—	—	—	6 10 2
23.....	—	—	33 8	2 4	—	—	—	—	— 17 9
24.....	—	—	52,421 7	—	—	—	201 0	—	1,323 13 —
25.....	—	—	1,591 2	292 0	—	Qrs Bush.	—	—	40 3 —
26.....	4 6	—	41,390 0	5,280 4	—	1,695 0	5 0	—	1,230 16 1.
27.....	5,799 1	—	7,460 2	298 3	—	7,861 7	130,343 2	—	8,839 17 8
28.....	9,752 2	—	12,276 2	1,563 7	—	—	19,039 7	—	1,881 5 10
29.....	42 4	—	321 4	13 2	—	—	82 1	—	14 19 8
30.....	—	—	—	3 6	—	—	—	—	— 1 10
31.....	—	—	21 0	—	—	—	—	—	— 10 6
32.....	942 3	—	16,570 1	829 6	—	—	56 2	—	471 17 4
33.....	3,227 7	—	217,637 5	836 5	—	—	8 1	—	5,576 13 1
34.....	5,110 2	—	122,477 3	11,892 3	—	—	1 1	—	3,540 5 8
35.....	3,597 0	—	82,205 4	541 6	—	—	89,642 5	—	6,771 2 6

THOMAS IRVING,  
Inspector General.

Inspector General's Office,  
Customhouse, London, 1 March 1790.

The inspector general begs leave to acquaint their lordships, that the rate of the duties upon corn depends upon a variety of circumstances, but more particularly upon the current prices at the time of importation, which prices cannot now be ascertained with any degree of accuracy during the period for which the above account is required. The inspector general has consulted some of the most informed officers in the long room; and they are of opinion, that the importation generally takes place under the low duties: he has, therefore, computed the quantities according to those rates.

## APPENDIX, No. 4.

1st. **W**OULD the last-mentioned method of making the returns, according to the directions of the corn act passed last session, embarrass the business, or make it so much more difficult in the execution, that the returns might not be so regularly made, or that the persons making them would in consequence of any additional trouble be dissatisfied with the allowance now made them?

In answering the above question, it will, I conceive, be proper to state the manner in which returns are made under the act of the 10th Geo. III. and also those made pursuant to the act of the last sessions.

By the first-mentioned act, the persons who make returns, receive a sum not exceeding two shillings for each. They collect the prices by inquiry among the dealers on market days; and when ascertained, they make up their returns in the following manner; viz.

County of  
Leicester.

Leicester.

Saturday.  
February 6th, 1790.

A RETURN of the Prices of Corn from this Market.

	Price by the customary measure.	Average.	Price by the standard Winchester bushel of 8 gallons.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Wheat per quarter, from - -	2 18 6	2 12 9	— 6 4
to	2 7 —		

*Note.*

The quarter is 8 bushels, the bushel containing 8 gallons and 2 pints.

The price of the other sorts of grain is given in like manner.

From the mode of collecting these prices, it is not likely that the inspectors can obtain them so accurately as could be wished, not being authorized to demand any account from the dealers, and the dealers not being obliged to render them any.

The method above stated, of giving the average, is not a true one. For if a greater quantity of wheat was sold at £2:18:6 than at £2, 7s. the average would be more than £2:12:9; and

if a less quantity was sold at the former than at the latter price, the average could not be so much as L. 2. 12s. 0d. It is therefore evident, that unless the quantity is known, and the cost of it, the *true average price* cannot be ascertained; of course the returns made under the act of 10th Geo. III. are not so accurate as those made pursuant to the late act, which enacts, That the buyers of corn for sale shall be sworn to deliver every week, to the inspector of the market at which they buy, a true account of the quantities they purchase, and the cost thereof.

When the inspector has received such accounts, which, at some places, are very numerous, he enters them in a book, from which he makes his return to the receiver of corn returns, as under, and then transmits a duplicate of it to the several collectors of customs within his district.

County of LANCASTER.

MANCHESTER, Saturday, Feb. 6th, 1790.

A RETURN of the quantities and prices of corn and grain from this market, for one week, ended this day.

	Quantities, customary measure.	Price by the quarter.	Amount of each parcel at the several rates.	The aggregate quantity, Winchester measure.	The average price per quarter, Winchester measure.	The average price per bushel, Winchester measure.
	Qur. Bushel.	s. d.	£s. s. d.	Qur. Bushel.	£s. s. d.	£s. s. d.
Wheat by the quarter, Winchester measure.	4 4	58 —	13 1 —			
	51 4	55 4	142 13 1			
	8 4	54 6	23 8 4			
	93 3	54 4	253 15 —			
	32 3	53 11	87 13 5			
	38 5	53 8	103 14 6			
	7 —	53 5	18 13 11			
	17 2	52 11	45 16 1			
	25 1	52 8	66 3 3			
	— 5	51 3	1 15 2			
	2 6	42 8	5 18 8			
	282 —1	—	762 12 8	282 —	2 14 — 0	— 6 9 0

If the average of the above was taken according to the usual method, under the act of 10th Geo. III. by giving the medium of the highest and lowest price thus, wheat from 58s. to 42s. 8d. the average price per quarter would be only L. 2 10s. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. instead of L. 2 14s. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

From what has been before stated, it is manifest, that the duty of the inspectors under the act of 10th Geo. III. is considerably less



than the duty of the inspectors under the late act, and that the allowance made to the former would be deemed very inadequate to the trouble of the latter.

- 2d. Can you recommend any method of making these returns, which will render them as accurate as those directed by the act of last year, and yet not put the persons, who are to make these returns, under too great difficulties in making them?

I can think of no method better calculated for obtaining true returns of the prices of corn and grain, than that directed by the act of last session.

JNo. JAs. CATHERWOOD,  
Receiver of corn returns.

17th Feb. 1790.

Year	Month	Day	Price	Quantity	Total
1789	Jan	1	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	2	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	3	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	4	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	5	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	6	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	7	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	8	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	9	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	10	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	11	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	12	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	13	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	14	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	15	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	16	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	17	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	18	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	19	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	20	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	21	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	22	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	23	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	24	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	25	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	26	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	27	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	28	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	29	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	30	10	100	1000
1789	Jan	31	10	100	1000

## APPENDIX, No. 5.

AN ACCOUNT of the several sorts of grain, exported and imported from and to Great Britain, for eight years, previous to the commencement of the new corn law (31 Geo. III. chap. 30.) and for eight years previous to its commencement; divided into periods of four years, with the average thereof.

Yrs.	Wheat and Flour.		Barley and Malt.		Oats and Oatmeal.		Rye.		Pease and Beans.	
	Exports.	Imports.	Exports.	Imports.	Exports.	Imports.	Exports.	Imports.	Exports.	Impts.
	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.
784										
85	89,288	216,947	66,889	77,182	13,511	266,998	6,731	24,779	10,976	45,816
86	132,685	110,863	166,448	67,212	25,273	274,089	13,163	28,761	15,904	16,813
87	205,466	51,468	111,598	62,374	19,293	478,473	6,736	3,643	16,300	35,709
	120,536	59,339	135,089	43,244	17,098	512,004	12,683	7,054	18,260	42,884
Tot.	547,975	438,612	480,024	250,012	75,175	1,513,564	39,313	64,237	61,449	141,222
Avr.	136,994	109,653	120,000	62,503	18,794	382,891	9,828	16,059	15,362	35,503
788	82,971	148,710	212,811	11,479	14,418	418,827	31,220	—	15,135	10,902
89	140,014	112,656	345,685	11,128	33,283	437,594	40,151	14,845	29,644	5911
90	30,892	222,557	50,966	29,718	14,290	786,546	47	21,682	17,576	43,094
91	70,626	460,056	41,590	61,134	16,498	836,736	3,528	56,378	13,707	14,726
Tot.	324,503	952,979	651,052	113,459	78,489	2,474,703	74,946	92,905	76,062	69,113
Avr.	81,126	238,245	162,763	28,365	19,622	618,676	18,736	23,226	19,015	17,278
1792	300,805	22,786	47,541	118,526	24,628	1,008,750	16,151	13,027	17,285	42,254
93	78,789	500,572	3,447	147,169	17,380	722,527	512	55,592	14,352	48,273
94	152,202	328,446	9,296	128,568	14,436	862,979	1,920	24,472	10,800	130.62
95	16,920	318,104	6,416	18,071	5,988	460,378	277	24,039	14,550	36,071
Tot.	548,716	1,169,908	66,700	412,334	62,432	3,054,634	13,860	117,130	56,987	258,210
Avr.	137,179	292,477	16,675	103,083	15,608	763,650	4,715	29,282	14,247	64,552
1796	21,809	889,003	13,099	40,032	10,845	801,372	122	164,153	10,725	67,917
97	51,470	462,579	13,089	64,198	20,010	609,120	108	8,258	11,300	35,212
98	55,409	396,941	15,075	116,484	25,037	773,995	680	6,925	19,907	34,010
99	37,397	466,208	41,386	19,537	19,280	529,540	40	22,051	11,818	13,550
Tot.	166,085	2,241,731	82,649	240,251	75,202	2,714,028	950	201,687	53,350	150,689
Avr.	41,521	553,683	20,662	60,063	18,800	678,507	237	50,422	13,337	37,672

## APPENDIX, No. 6.

An ACCOUNT of the number of Bills, for Inclosure and Drainage, that passed the Legislature, in each year, from 1780 to 1799, inclusive, with the averages thereof; in periods of four years.

	No.	Average.
1780.....	37	
1781.....	22	
1782.....	15	
1783.....	18	
	—	23
1784.....	16	
1785.....	23	
1786.....	24	
1787.....	24	
	—	22
1788.....	35	
1789.....	36	
1790.....	28	
1791.....	42	
	—	35
1792.....	43	
1793.....	63	
1794.....	78	
1795.....	82	
	—	66
1796.....	78	
1797.....	91	
1798.....	53	
1799.....	80	
	—	75



# R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

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*The Corn Committee in the House of Commons, instructed to examine the act of the 31st of the King, have made the following Report, viz.*

THAT, in pursuance of the instructions received, they proceeded to examine the act of the 31st of the King, and to take, from the best information they could obtain, a comparative view of the price of labour, and of the unavoidable expences incident to the farmer, in the year 1791, and to the farmer at this present time; as the best criterion by which they might judge what ought to be the price of the different species of grain, so as to allow to the grower such a fair and reasonable profit as may induce him to pursue that line of husbandry which will the most contribute to the production of such an ample supply of the different kinds of corn and grain, as may be sufficient for the consumption of the kingdom. The certainty of this supply cannot be obtained without a con-

siderable surplus in plentiful years, above the demand of the home market, it therefore becomes necessary that the grower should have such a ready sale for that surplus by exportation, and bounty if requisite, as may remove all apprehension of his not being able to obtain, from a glut of the commodity at the home market, such a price for that surplus as will afford him an equitable profit on his labour and industry, and capital employed in its production. It appears then, to your committee, that the only mode by which an ample and plentiful supply can justly be expected, is to secure a certain and uniform fair and reasonable price to the farmer.

It appears to your committee, that the act passed in 1791, giving a power to the king and council, when parliament is not sitting, of prohibiting the exportation of corn, if the average price thereof, taken from the return of the whole kingdom, is higher than the price at, or above which foreign corn of the same sort is allowed to be imported at the low duties; and to permit, generally, for three months certain, the importation of such sort on the lowest duties then payable, ought never to be exercised but on a strong and uncontrovertible necessity; as it may, if used upon light and insufficient ground, operate as a great discouragement to the growth and production of corn in this kingdom, by rendering the market uncertain, by making the export trade liable to be stopped, and by enabling a general import of foreign corn to be poured into the kingdom, for the term of three months, at so small a variation and advance of price in the home market, as may perhaps be expressly occasioned, by particular combinations, for the very purpose of producing that effect.

Your committee are cautious of recommending a repeal of that part of the act, lest a necessity for the exercise of that power might possibly arise, thinking it better, under such circumstances, that it should be exercised according to law, than in opposition to it; but, in full confidence, that when due encouragement is given to the agriculture of the country, and the crown and waste lands brought into cultivation, that the product of the growth of corn in Great Britain, will afford such regular and ample supply for the consumption of the kingdom, as to admit the repeal of that power given to his majesty's privy council, without the danger of any detriment arising therefrom to the public.

It further appears to your committee, that the tables in the said act of the 31st of the king, for regulating the prices at which the ports for exportation are to be open, with or without bounty, and at which the importation of foreign corn is to be admitted, on the low duties generally, into the kingdom, require very material alteration. This alteration seems to be demanded by the advance in the price of labour, and all other expences to which the farmer is now subject, beyond what he was liable to at the time when those regulations were established.

Your committee therefore, recommend the tables hereto annexed, to be adopted, instead of those in the act of the 31st of the king, as more fitted to the circumstances of the present times.

It appears further to your committee, that the aggregate average prices of the twelve maritime districts, is the proper rule by which the tables for regulating the export and import of corn to and from this kingdom ought to be governed.



And it appears further to your committee, that no corn should be imported into any one district, where the price of corn, taken at the two last preceding market days is below the aggregate average prices of the twelve maritime districts, at which corn is allowed to be imported in the kingdom.

The object of your committee, in fixing the price at which the ports shall be open for the general importation of corn, so much higher than the price at which it is permitted to be exported, is to prevent corn from being imported into one part of the kingdom, and exported from another, at the same time ; and, by facilitating the means of conveying the surplus to a foreign market, to give that encouragement to the grower which may ultimately produce such an ample supply as shall render the importation of foreign corn unnecessary. In this hope, your committee are the more sanguine, from observing by the corn returns, that in the course of years, when the regulations were most favourable to the growers, and when the least check was put upon the export trade, the export of corn from this kingdom for more than sixty years in succession, produced annually six or seven hundred thousand pounds ; leaving besides, at a regular and moderate price, an ample sufficiency for the home consumption ; and your committee have on the other hand observed, that as the restrictions under the laws began more and more to bear hard upon the grower, and to check and stop the export trade, the importation has increased, and in the last thirteen years alone has amounted to the enormous sum of thirty millions, whilst the whole advantage of the export trade has been lost to this kingdom.

FINIS.

# A C T

REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING REPORT  
OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS.

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*An Act to Regulate the Importation and Exporta-  
tion of Corn, and the Bounties and Duties pay-  
able thereon.*

WHEREAS an act, passed in the thirty-first year of the reign of his present majesty, intituled, an act for regulating the importation and exportation of corn, and the payment of the duty on foreign corn imported, and of the bounty on British corn exported: And whereas it is expedient, that so much of the said recited act as regulates the prices at which British corn, grain, malt, meal, flour, or biscuit, may be exported, except to Ireland, and corn, grain, meal, and flour imported, except from Ireland, and also the duties and bounties payable

thereon, except such duty or sum of money as may be payable in respect of the warehousing of any corn, be repealed, and that other provisions should be made in relation to the importation thereof into and bounties on exportation thereof out of Great Britain, and that regulations should also be made in relation to the exportation from and importation into Ireland, of corn, grain, malt, meal, flour, and biscuit: May it therefore please your majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the king's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that, from and after the fifteenth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and four, so much of the said recited act of the thirty first year aforesaid, as regulates the prices at which British corn, grain, malt, meal, flour, and biscuit, may be exported, except to Ireland, and at which foreign corn, grain, meal, and flour, may be imported, except from Ireland, and as fixes the duties and bounties payable thereon, shall be and the same is hereby repealed, except so far as the same relates to any duty payable on any corn or grain in respect of the warehousing thereof.

II. And be it further enacted, that, from and after the said fifteenth day of November one thousand eight hundred and four, the importation and exportation of corn, grain, malt, meal, flour, and biscuit into and from England and Wales, shall be regulated by the aggregate average price of corn, grain, and oatmeal, of the whole of the twelve maritime districts in England and Wales; and the importation and exportation into and from Scotland, shall be regulated by the aggregate average



price of the whole of the four districts in Scotland ; such average price to be ascertained quarterly, weekly, and monthly from such returns, and in such manner as is directed by the said recited act for ascertaining the average prices of corn, grain, meal, and flour ; any thing in any act or acts to the contrary notwithstanding.

III. And be it further enacted, that, from and after the said fifteenth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and four, the several bounties specified in the schedule to this act annexed marked (A.), and no other, shall be allowed and payable, and paid in respect of and upon British corn, grain, malt, meal, flour, and biscuit, exported from Great Britain ; and all such bounties shall be allowed and payable and paid, and the exportation of British corn, grain, malt, meal, and flour prohibited according to the prices and regulations of the said table ; any thing in the said recited act to the contrary notwithstanding.

IV. And be it further enacted, that the several and respective duties specified and set forth in the schedule to this act annexed, marked (B.), and no other or different duties, except as aforesaid, shall be charged and levied upon and payable and paid in respect of all corn, grain, meal, and flour, imported into Great Britain ; and such duties shall be charged and payable and paid according to the prices and regulations in the said schedule ; any thing in any act or acts to the contrary notwithstanding.

V. And be it further enacted, that nothing in this act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to the exportation or importation of corn, grain, meal, or flour, from Great Britain to Ireland, or from Ireland to Great Britain ; and all

the powers, provisions, authorities, regulations, penalties, forfeitures, clauses, matters, and things in the said act or any subsequent act contained, and not hereby altered, varied, or repealed, shall extend, and be construed to extend, to this act, and be used and applied in carrying the same into execution, as fully as if the provisions and clauses and schedules of this act had made part of the said acts, and as if the clauses of the said acts had been severally, as far as the same were applicable, re-enacted in the body of this act.

VI. Provided always, and be it further enacted, that whenever the average prices for regulating the importation and exportation of corn, grain, meal, and flour, into and from Great Britain, shall be under the prices at which the same may be importable into Great Britain on the low duties from foreign parts, it shall and may be lawful to and for any person or persons to export any such corn or grain of British growth, or any meal or flour made thereof, from Great Britain to Ireland; and in like manner, whenever the average prices for regulating the importation and exportation of corn, grain, and flour, into and from Ireland, shall be under the prices at which the same may be importable into Ireland, on the low duties from foreign parts, it shall and may be lawful for any person or persons to export any such corn or grain of Irish growth, or any meal or flour made thereof, from Ireland to Great Britain, provided the same be exported in British or Irish ships owned and navigated according to law.

VII. And be it further enacted, that, from and after the said fifteenth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and four, the importation of foreign corn, grain, meal, and flour, into Ireland,

and the exportation of Irish corn, grain, malt, meal, flour, and biscuit, from Ireland, and the payment of the duties and bounties thereon, shall be regulated according to the schedules to this act annexed, marked (C.) and (D.) respectively, and the duties therein specified shall be charged and payable and paid, and the bounties therein specified shall be allowed and paid, according to the prices and regulations therein contained; any thing in any act or acts relating to corn, grain, meal, or flour, imported into or exported from Ireland, to the contrary notwithstanding.

VIII. And be it further enacted, that all the provisions, powers, authorities, regulations, penalties, and forfeitures, clauses, matters, and things now in force in any act of parliament, in relation to the importation into Ireland or exportation from Ireland of any corn, grain, malt, meal, or flour, not contrary to the provisions of this act, shall extend, and be construed to extend, and be applied and enforced for the carrying into execution the purposes of this act, in relation to the duties and bounties, and importation and exportation of corn, grain, meal, and flour, into and from Ireland respectively, and regulations relating thereto, specified in the said schedules marked (C.) and (D.), as fully and effectually as if the same were repeated and re-enacted in and made part of the body of this act.



# SCHEDULES to which SCHEDULE (B.)—Showing the Prices according to which

	Wheat.	Rye, Pease, and Beans.
<b>When imported from the province of Quebec, or the other British colonies or plantations in North America:</b>		
If under.....per quarter	53s.....	35s.....
<i>High Duty</i> .....do.....	.....24s. 3d.	.....22. 0d.
If at, or above.....per quarter	53s.....	35s.....
but under.....do.....	56s.....	37s.....
<i>First Low Duty</i> .....	.....2s. 6d.	.....1s. 6d.
If at, or above.....per quarter	56s.....	37s.....
<i>Second Low Duty</i> .....	.....0s. 6d.	.....0s. 3d.
<hr/>		
<b>When imported from any other foreign country:</b>		
If under.....per quarter	63s.....	42s.....
<i>High Duty</i> .....do.....	.....24s. 3d.	.....22s. 0d.
If at, or above.....per quarter	63s.....	42s.....
but under.....do.....	66s.....	44.....
<i>First Low Duty</i> .....	.....2s. 6d.	.....1s. 6d.
If at, or above.....per quarter	66s.....	44s.....
<i>Second Low Duty</i> .....	.....0s. 6d.	.....0. 3d.

## IMPORTATION of Wheat, Meal, and Flour, to be governed as follows:

When imported from the province of Quebec, or the other British colonies or plantations in North America,

High duty.....per cwt.....6s. 6d.

First low do.....do.....1s. 6d.

Second low do.....do.....0s. 2d.

When imported from any other foreign country,

High duty.....per cwt.....6s. 6d.

First low do.....do.....1s. 6d.

Second low do.....do.....1s. 0d.

Malt made of Wheat.....prohibited.

Rye ground, or Malt made of Rye; Pease and Beans ground, prohibited.

this Act refers.

High or Low Duties are to take place on Importation.

Barley, Beer, or Bigg.	Oats.	When imported from the province of Quebec, or the other British Colonies or Plantations in North Ame- rica.	Oatmeal.
26s. 0d. ....	17s. ....	{ If under.....per boll of } 140 lbs. avoird, or 128 lbs. Scotch troy. } for every boll,	16s. 6d. ....
..... 22s. 0d. ....	..... 6s. 7d.		..... 8s. 0d.
		<i>High Duty</i> .....	
26s. 0d. ....	17s. ....	If at, or above ..... per boll	16s. 6d. ....
28s. 0d. ....	18s. ....	but under.....Do.	17s. 4d. ....
..... 1s. 3d. ....	..... 1s. 0d.	<i>First Low Duty</i> .....	1s. 0d.
28s. 0d. ....	18s. ....	If at, or above ..... per boll	17s. 4d. ....
..... 0s. 3d. ....	..... 0s. 2d.	<i>Second Low Duty</i> .....	0s. 2d.
<hr/>			
		When imported from any other foreign country:	
31s. 6d. ....	21s. ....	If under.....	20s. ....
..... 22s. 0d. ....	..... 6s. 7d.	<i>High Duty</i> .....	..... 8s. 0d.
31s. 6d. ....	21s. ....	If at, or above.....per boll	20s. ....
33s. 0. ....	22s. ....	but under.....Do.	21s. ....
..... 1s. 3d. ....	..... 1s. 0d.	<i>First Low Duty</i> .....	1s. 0d.
33s. 0d. ....	22s. ....	If at, or above ..... per boll	21s. ....
..... 0s. 3d. ....	..... 0s. 2d.	<i>Second Low Duty</i> .....	0s. 6d.

IMPORTATION of Indian Corn or Maize, to be governed by the price of Barley, as follows:

When imported from the province of Quebec, or the other British Colonies or Plantations in North America,

High duty.....per quarter.....22s. 0d.

First low ditto..... ditto .....1s. 3d.

Second ditto..... ditto .....0s 3d.

When imported from any other foreign country,

High duty.....per quarter.....22s. 0d.

First low ditto.....ditto..... 1s. 3d.

Second ditto.....ditto..... 0s. 3d.

Barley, Indian Corn or Maize, Beer or Bigg ground; and Malt made of Barley, Indian Corn or Maize, Beer or Bigg.....prohibited.

Malt made of Oats.....prohibited.







# SCHEDULE (D)—Shewing the Prices according to which the High or

When imported from the province of Quebec, or the other British colonies or plantations in North America.	Wheat.	Rye, Pease & Beans.
If under.....per barrel British.....	32s. 7d.....	22s. 3d.....
<i>High Duty</i> .....British.....	.....14s. 10d.	.....14s. 0d.
If at, or above.....per barrel British.....	32s. 7d.....	22s. 3d.....
But under.....per barrel British.....	34s. 4d.....	23s. 6d.....
<i>First Low Duty</i> .....British.....	.....1s. 6d.	.....0s. 11d.
If at, or above.....per barrel British.....	34s. 4d.....	23s. 6d.....
<i>Second Low Duty</i> .....British.....	.....0s. 3d.	.....0s. 1d.
When imported from any other foreign country,		
If under.....per barrel British.....	38s. 8d.....	26s. 8d.....
<i>High Duty</i> .....British.....	.....14s. 10d.	.....14s. 0d.
If at, or above.....per barrel British.....	38s. 8d.....	26s. 8d.....
But under.....per barrel British.....	40s. 6d.....	28s. 0d.....
<i>First Low Duty</i> .....British.....	.....1s. 6d.	.....0s. 11d.
If at, or above.....per barrel British.....	40s. 6d.....	28s. 0d.....
<i>Second Low Duty</i> .....British.....	.....0s. 3d.	.....0s. 1d.

## IMPORTATION of Wheat, Meal, and Flour, to be governed as follows:

When imported from Quebec, or the other British colonies or plantations, in North America,

High Duty.....per cwt.....6s. 6d. British.  
 First low duty. ....do.....1s. 6d. do.  
 Second low duty.....do.....0s. 2d. do.

When imported from any other foreign country.

High duty.....per cwt.....6s. 6d.  
 First low duty.....do.....1s. 6d.  
 Second low duty.....do.....1s. 0d.

Malt made of Wheat.....prohibited.  
 Rye ground, or Malt made of Rye; Pease ground, and Beans ground...prohibited.

Low Duties are to take place on Importation into Ireland.

Barley, Beer or Bigg.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	s.	d.
14s. 9d.....	10s. 11d.....	If under, per cwt. of 112lbs. Avoirdupois British	13	2
.....12s. 6d.	.....4s. 2d.	..... <i>High Duty</i> .....for every cwt. British	8	0
14s. 9d.....	10s. 11d.....	If at, or above.....per cwt. British	13	2
16s. 0d.....	11s. 7d.....	But under.....per cwt. British	13	10
.....0s. 8d.	.....0s. 7d.	..... <i>First Low Duty</i> .....per cwt. British	1	0
16s. 0d.....	11s. 7d.....	If at, or above.....per cwt. British	13	10
.....0s. 1d.	.....0s. 1d.	..... <i>Second Low Duty</i> .....per cwt. British	0	2
18s. 0d.....	13s. 6d.....	If under.....per cwt. British	16	0
.....12s. 6d.	.....4s. 2d.	..... <i>High Duty</i> .....per cwt. British	8	0
18s. 0d.....	13s. 6d.....	If at, or above.....per cwt. British	16	0
18s. 10d.....	14s. 2d.....	But under.....per cwt. British	16	9
.....0s. 8d.	.....0s. 7d.	..... <i>First Low Duty</i> .....per cwt. British	1	0
18s. 10d.....	14s. 2d.....	If at, or above.....per cwt. British	16	9
.....0s. 1d.	.....0s. 1d.	..... <i>Second Low Duty</i> .....per cwt. British	0	6

IMPORTATION of Indian Corn or Maize, to be governed by the Price of Barley as follows:

When imported from Quebec, or the other British colonies or plantations in North America,

High duty.....per barrel.....15s. 0d. British.  
First low duty.....do.....0s. 10d. do.  
Second low duty.....do.....0s. 2d. do.

When imported from any other foreign country,

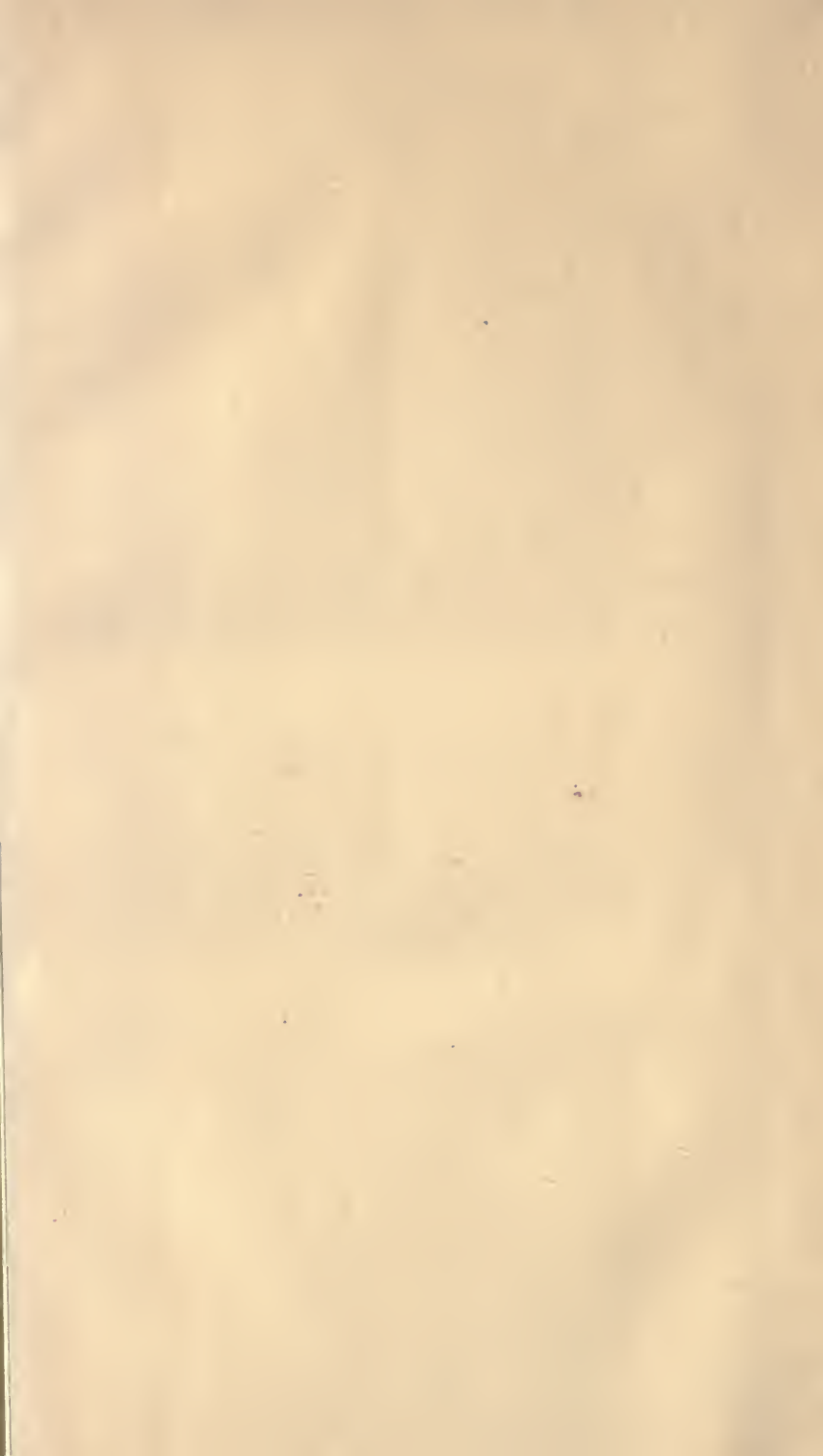
High duty .....15s. 0d. British.  
First low duty. ....0s. 10d. do.  
Second low duty.....0s. 2d. do.  
Malt made of Oats.....prohibited.



# ERRATA.

- Page 47 line 7th from the bottom, instead of "possessions," read "professions."
- 50 line 4th from the top, after "as it maintains fewer people" add, "and as fewer live in towns."
- 126 line 7th from the top, after "then during the last sixty years" add, "of the preceding century."
- 150 line 7th from the bottom, instead of II. read III. section.
- 177 In the note, instead of "this chapter," read "his chapter."
- 180 line 9th from the bottom, insert the word, "or" after manufacturer.
- 196 line 15th from the top, instead of "or to live," read "or living."
- 201 To the title of the 2d section of the 7th chapter, add, "from internal sources."
- 222 line 6th from the bottom, delete the word "and," after "other countries."
- 249 line 11th from the bottom, instead of "miseries," read "misery."
- 250 line 6th from the top, instead of "its," read "it."

C 10















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